

RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE
Telecommunications Program

Distance Learning and
Telemedicine Grant Program

*FY 2013 Application
Guide*



Committed to the future of rural communities



DISTANCE LEARNING & TELEMEDICINE PROGRAM
GRANT APPLICATION GUIDE
FISCAL YEAR 2013

RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program

Administered under the Rural Utilities Service – a Rural Development Agency of USDA

Advanced telecommunications services play a vital role in the economic development, education and health care of rural Americans. The Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program is specifically designed to assist rural communities in acquiring distance learning and telemedical technologies so that local teachers, and medical service providers who serve rural residents can link to other teachers, medical professionals, and other needed expertise located at distances too far to access otherwise. Since 1994, the DLT Grant Program has helped to establish hundreds of distance learning and telemedicine systems improving quality of life for thousands of residents in rural communities all across the United States.

Our partnership with rural America is long-standing. For 60 years, the Telecommunications Program has been at the forefront providing infrastructure financing that has brought advanced telecommunications services to the most rural areas of our country. Today, the Telecommunications Program of the Rural Utilities Service continues as an essential source of financing and technical assistance for rural telecommunication systems. The DLT Grant Program strengthens that partnership and commitment by continuing to improve the quality of life for rural citizens.

The Rural Utilities Service Telecommunications Programs have played a crucial role in financing the telecom infrastructure that links rural communities to the mainstream of regional, state and national information and communications networks.

Thank you for your interest and participation in the DLT Grant Program. We hope that this instruction booklet will provide you with the guidance needed to prepare a competitive proposal.

Section I - General Information

This *Application Guide* will help you apply for a grant under the DLT Program. Where appropriate, the *Guide* includes suggestions and samples. We urge you to use your unique understanding of your community and your project to prepare a compelling case for grant financing.

This *Application Guide* is intended as a complete source of information for preparing a successful application. It has been designed for the first-time applicant with no previous experience applying for grants. We hope that you will find it helpful.

A. Types of Financial Assistance

The DLT Program is legislatively authorized to provide three kinds of financial assistance.
100% Grant 2) Combination Loan-Grant 3) 100% Loan

This guide only covers the application requirements for a 100% grant (with matching fund requirements).

B. Fiscal Year 2013 Grant Funding

Please refer to this year's NOFA for funding level of the DLT Program, the maximum grant amount, 44 and the minimum grant amount.

C. Who's Eligible?

To be eligible for a grant, your organization must:

A.) Be legally organized as an incorporated organization or partnership; an Indian tribe or tribal organization; a state or local unit of government; a consortium; or other legal entity, including a private corporation organized on a for profit or not-for profit basis with the legal capacity to contract with the United States Government. Specific legal definitions and citations can be found in 7 CFR 1703.103(a)(1) & 1703.125(k). Many applicants for DLT Grants are informal consortia. This means that they are an assemblage of individual legal entities, such as school districts, that are working together specifically for the purpose of applying for a grant. However, as a group they do not have a separate legal existence. For additional guidance about applying as a consortium, please turn to Legal Eligibility under Section IV-

B.) Either operate a rural community facility directly, or deliver distance learning or telemedicine services to another organization that operates a rural community facility.

C.) Currently deliver or propose to deliver distance learning or telemedicine services for the term of the grant. Competitive proposals demonstrate an ability to sustain a project beyond the three-year term of the grant. To receive a grant, the purposes must meet the grant definition of distance learning and/or telemedicine. The DLT program is focused on financing projects that will be sustainable. Planning studies, research projects, and short-term demonstration projects will not be considered.

Equipment vendors, system integrators, and other businesses whose purpose in the proposal is to sell equipment or technological services to support applicants cannot themselves be applicants or affiliates of the applicant.

Note: Electric or telecommunications borrowers financed through the Utilities Programs of Rural Development are not eligible for grants, but are eligible for loans.

D. Scoring Criteria

The DLT Grant Program is a competitive program. Applications are scored in **objective** and **subjective** categories. Objective criteria are statistical in nature and evaluated by comparing statistics or numerical data. Decisions made from subjective criteria are rendered by a judgment, an informed opinion based on various factors, including experience, knowledge and statistical comparisons. The table below lists each DLT category, and the maximum points available. More detailed descriptions of the scoring categories can be found in Section IV of this *Application Guide*.

Objective Criteria

Rural Area (Rurality)	This criterion measures rural benefit. The score threshold for the application to be considered in the competition at all is 20 points. This category based on Census data (up to 45 Points).
Economic Need (NSLP)	This criterion measures the general economic need of the area through the use of statistics from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) (up to 35 Points).
Matching Funds (Leveraging)	The DLT program requires a minimum match of 15%. Higher matches receive more points. There are special matching provisions for American Samoa, Guam, Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands (up to 35 Points).

Subjective Criteria

Additional NSLP	An applicant with NSLP eligibility below 50% may request additional points, and could receive additional points if they can document that the NSLP percentage is not an accurate indicator of the economic need of the area. (up to 10 Points)
Need for Services and Project Benefits (Needs & Benefits)	This criterion compares the specific need for the technology in the proposed service territory, and how the proposed project will address those needs and benefit the residents of the area affected. (up to 45 Points)
Innovativeness	This criterion assesses how the objectives of the proposed project are met in new and creative ways. (up to 15 Points)
Cost Effectiveness	This criterion evaluates the efficiency with which the proposed project and its technology deliver educational and/or medical benefits to beneficiaries. (up to 35 Points)

E. Contacts & the Web

The DLT Program staff is available to answer questions about the application process and program requirements. If you have questions, the time to contact us with those questions is before you submit the application.

Contact us at:

Phone: 202-720-0665

Fax: 202-720-1051

Email: dltinfo@wdc.usda.gov

We post the latest DLT developments including the FY 2013 *Application Guide: (Narrative, Toolkit, & Regulation)* and *Notice of Funding Availability, or Notice of Solicitation of Applications* on the DLT Resources Web page:
www.rurdev.usda.gov/UTP_DLTResources.html

F. Freedom of Information Act

Should your organization win an award, your application must be made available to others when requested under provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Under FOIA, some sensitive information is protected from release, but the balance is not. Costs to assemble and duplicate the material are charged to the entity that requests the information. If you provide any information in your application that you feel should be protected, please identify this information and provide justification as to why it should be withheld. For more information about FOIA see:
www.da.usda.gov/foia.htm

It is our experience that the common motivation for obtaining a DLT application under FOIA is to use the application as a template. We are of the opinion that this is a not a productive approach to crafting a successful DLT application. Not counting the cost of obtaining a grant application under FOIA (which can be considerable), most of that application would be irrelevant as guidance to a prospective applicant. And while it might seem useful to see another's responses in the subjective scoring categories, the best scores in those categories are awarded for responses specific to the applicant's project.

Good applications come from applicants who know well their own community and who have well thought-out projects. As an applicant, remember that no one knows your project and special circumstances as well as you. As a consequence, no one can do a better job of crafting an application than you.

Section II - Application Submission

A. DLT Program Regulation and FY 2013 Application Guide

The implementing regulation for the DLT Program is 7 CFR 1703, Subparts D through G (Part 1703) as supplemented by the FY 2013 Notice of Funds Availability and as elaborated upon in this

Application Guide. The *FY 2013 Application Guide* is designed to be an easy-to-use version of Part 1703 and the NOSA.

Reminders for FY 2013

Application Preparation – In the Executive Summary (TAB C), we ask that you identify the grant writer, i.e., the person or organization responsible for preparing the application and the relationship of that writer to the applicant. For example, the writer may be a staff member of the applicant organization, a professional grant writer, or an equipment vendor. With respect to equipment vendors, we hear of applicants that make arrangements with vendors to prepare their application with the understanding that should the project be selected for an award, the applicant is obliged to obtain its equipment from that vendor. Please be aware that we do not recognize and will not enforce such a *quid pro quo*. We expect awardees to purchase equipment that best meets the needs of their project at the best possible price. Vendors that choose to assist applicants with their application should understand that they do so at their own risk.

Application Format – Applications are to be presented in the format described in the Guide.

Contact Information – Certain aspects of the DLT competition may require you to respond to us by a deadline based on the date of our correspondence which we send to you by fax or by email. The **fax and/or email address will be sent to the contact person shown in block f of the SF-424, *Application for Federal Assistance***, unless that block does not contain a fax number or email address. In that case, the fax will be sent to the fax number or email address of the person who signs the SF-424 as shown in block 21. If no fax number is provided, or if the contact fax number is changed without our being informed, correspondence will be sent by regular mail.

Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System Registration – As required by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), all applicants for grants must supply a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying. The Standard Form 424 (SF-424) contains a blank to enter your DUNS number. The DUNS number can be obtained free of charge by calling Dun & Bradstreet. Please see http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/duns_num_guide.pdf for more information on how to obtain a DUNS number or how to verify your organization's number.

System for Award Management Registration – Applicants, whether applying electronically or by paper, also must register in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting an application. Applicants may register for the SAM at <https://www.sam.gov/>. The SAM registration must remain active with current information at all times while RUS is considering an application or while a Federal Grant Award or loan is active. To maintain the registration in the SAM database the applicant must review and update the information in the SAM database annually from date of initial registration or from the date of the last update. The applicant must ensure that the information in the database is current, accurate, and complete.

Exact Site Location – Each location must be identified by street address, or in situations where a street address does not show up in the Census website or in the Rand McNally Atlas, by its latitude and longitude coordinates. See the *Rurality* section for more information.

Previous Awards – Discuss any DLT awards received in the previous two years (2011 & 2012) by the applicant or other participants in the project. See item 6 under “Telecommunications System Plan Details.”

Eligible Purposes – Three categories of eligible purposes are described in detail elsewhere in this Guide: (1) equipment & related software; (2) instructional programming; and (3) technical assistance and instruction for using eligible equipment. Per §1703.121 grants shall be expended only for the costs associated with the initial capital assets associated with the project.

Focus on Rural Areas – The intent of the DLT Program is to benefit rural areas (20,000 or less). The definition of “end-user” in the regulation envisioned only rural facilities such as rural elementary, secondary, and other educational institutions; rural hospitals, primary care centers, or other rural community facilities. Please limit your projects to rural end-users. We recognize that some projects would like to include end users from more urbanized areas, defined by the existing DLT regulation) as an incorporated or unincorporated town greater than 20,000 in their project. However, the Agency will evaluate projects based on its benefit to rural areas. A project where the urban benefit is more than incidental to the project, may not only score low (or ineligible) in the *Rurality* criterion, but will score comparatively low in the subjective *Needs and Benefits* criterion.

Online Education – Occasionally, we receive applications or inquiries from educational institutions wishing to provide online courses via the Internet. Keep in mind that a project that does not include a direct video connection between teacher and students will not meet the definition of distance learning in the regulation. Also, if the course offering is generally available over the Internet where beneficiaries can be located anywhere, including urban areas, such projects cannot be accurately scored for *Rurality*. Projects where end users cannot be accurately identified as rural end users will not be considered for funding. See Section IV, E-1 for more detail about measuring rural benefit and calculating your *Rurality* score.

Applications from a Consortium – Many of the applications we receive come from consortia. On occasions, the applicant is an existing established consortium with the legal ability to contract with the Federal Government. Such an organization can apply in the name of the formal consortium. An application from a group of legal entities that are formed solely for the purpose of applying for a DLT grant without creating a formal legal structure may win an award. When this is the case, this informal consortium may encounter legal complications and delays in executing a grant agreement. An informal consortium with no legal existence is not eligible to receive an award. **To avoid or minimize complications during the award process, please refer to IV-B of this Guide, *Legal Eligibility*.**

Certifications from Consortia – Applications from informal consortia must include from each member a set of Certifications under Tab H. This would create a large amount of paper. To avoid this, applicants may choose only to supply a single set of certifications with the original copy of the application.

NSLP – NSLP percentages should not be rounded. See Section E-2 for details.

In-Kind Matching – The purposes for match and grant are identical. For an item to be credited as a match, it must be integral to and necessary for the DLT project, not simply a technology purchase

made in the same timeframe. See Section E-3 including the “special note” for details about in-kind matching.

B. FY 2013 Application Deadline – Please refer to this year’s NOFA.

Applications are evaluated for eligibility and scored on information submitted by the application deadline. RUS will not solicit or consider eligibility and scoring information submitted after the deadline. All applications must either be delivered into our hands or carry third-party proof of shipping (or electronic submission, if applicable) by the application deadline to be eligible for funding consideration under the FY 2013 DLT program. The proof-of-shipping must be from a third party such as the Postal Service or a commercial carrier. Evidence of shipping not under direct control of such a third party, such as a **printed label from a postage meter, does not constitute proof-of-shipping**. The following proofs are acceptable:

- A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark
- A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the USPS
- A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier

Applications will not be accepted by fax or e-mail. Late applications will be returned without being considered for funding.

No Time Extensions – The Agency does not grant extensions to the grant application deadline under any circumstances.

C. How to Submit a Paper Application

Paper/Electronic Hybrid – We recognize that many applicants transcribe our forms into electronic form. We provide the *DLT Toolkit* in Word as well as PDF. The Word version allows text to be entered. In addition, we are providing the *Budget Worksheets* in Excel. If you have prepared your *Budget* in Excel, please include a copy of your electronic *Worksheets* onto a CD or DVD and insert them to your paper application.

In our experience the most fail-proof method of submitting an application is to use a reliable shipping carrier (as mentioned above), and to have it documented with a proof-of-shipping label or tracking documentation.

Ship your applications with original signatures and 2 copies of your application to:

Director, ASD
RUS Telecom, STOP 1550, Room 2844
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-1550

Note: Packages arriving at USDA via ordinary first-class mail (USPS) are irradiated, which may damage their contents. Please consider this when selecting your shipping method.

D. How to Submit an Electronic Application

We accept electronic applications submitted by the deadline though we may request original signatures on paper later. Use the Federal government's e-grants web site (Grants.gov): www.grants.gov

Please follow the instructions at Grants.gov. If you experience a technical problem retrieving or submitting an electronic application, use the Grants.gov customer support resources (click the "Customer Support" tab on any page of Grants.gov to get started). Grants.gov is operated by a Federal Agency that is not part of the USDA.

We strongly encourage you to obtain all the necessary sign-ups, credentials and authorizations well in advance of the application deadline. You will need to have registered in the System for Awards Management (SAM) before you can submit electronically. In addition, Grants.gov requires some one-time credentialing and online authentication procedures. These procedures may take several business days to complete.

Applications are to be presented in the format described in this Guide. Grants.gov breaks a grant application into multiple files, which we must print and assemble. Please identify each page of an electronic submission with a Tab identifier and page number, as if you were submitting a paper application, so that we can assemble the application as you intended.

We highly recommend that you apply early allowing plenty of time to submit the application. Please note that the DLT Program does not accept technical difficulties experienced with Grants.gov as a reason for: 1) missing the DLT application deadline; 2) missing key documents, including documents that determine eligibility; or 3) not submitting the application at all. If you are planning to submit an electronic application close to the deadline, we urge you to have an alternative plan for physical shipment of your application in the event you experience technical difficulties with the Grants.gov site, www.grants.gov.

Section III - Application Process

A. Review Ready

We review each application for completeness to ensure that it includes all items required by the regulation. If the application is complete, the applicant will be so informed. Applications are evaluated for eligibility and scored on information submitted by the application deadline. Applications that do not meet the minimum set of requirements as specified in the relevant rules (7 CFR 1703 and the 2011 Notice of Solicitation of Applications), as discussed throughout this *Guide*, will be returned as ineligible for funding along with a letter explaining this determination. Please note that an application may be ineligible for other reasons. An incoherent application is ineligible since the project cannot be evaluated when discrepancies exist among end user and hub sites, items in the budget, or other unexplained references. It is important that applicants check through their applications for such discrepancies before submitting them.

We may contact you for clarification or to request missing information not necessary for determining eligibility or scoring, but necessary for the award of a grant. In such cases, the applicant will have fifteen calendar days to deliver a response to this request. If that response is satisfactory to the Agency, the applicant will be informed that its application is then complete. Otherwise, the application would be returned as ineligible.

B. Score Appeal Process

Appeals of Objective Scores – Upon completion of the objective scoring process the Agency will notify you (in writing or by email) of your preliminary score. You may appeal this preliminary score. For RUS will only consider a written appeal from the applicant. The letter of appeal must be **delivered to RUS within ten calendar days** from the date of our correspondence informing you of your preliminary score. As we cannot consider additional information submitted after the deadline, we ask that you do not submit new information in support of your appeal. To be successful, the applicant must demonstrate that the Agency made a scoring error. An appeal of an objective score is more likely to result in a scoring change because scoring is based on objective data. If the applicant can demonstrate that we made an error in evaluating the application's objective data, the appeal will be successful.

Appeals of Subjective Scores – An applicant is free to appeal a subjective score, but it should be aware that such an appeal is much less likely to be successful. As the name suggests, subjective scores are based on the subjective evaluation of the supporting arguments made in the application. Not only are these scores subjective, but they are relative, in the sense that each application is scored in comparison to other applications submitted in the same competition year. This means that scores received in prior years for similar projects are not relevant. Without knowledge of how the other applicants in the current competition made their case and how the supporting documentation in your application compares to that submitted by others, it is difficult for an applicant to demonstrate a scoring error on our part.

C. Grant Awards

Following the appeals process, we rank applications by their final scores. Applications are selected for funding based on scores, availability of funds, and 7 CFR 1703.127.

Regardless of the number of points your application receives, the Administrator may take any of the following actions:

Limit the number of applications selected for projects located in any one State during a fiscal year. (This authority allows the Administrator to limit awards to any one state. It does not allow the Administrator to make awards in other states regardless of score.)

Limit the number of selected applications for a particular project.

Select an application receiving fewer points than another application if there are insufficient funds during a particular funding period to select the higher scoring application. If the Administrator makes this kind of selection and it affects your application, we will provide you an opportunity to reduce the amount of your grant request to the amount of funds available.

Grant Agreement and Term – DLT grants have a term of 3 years and cannot be extended. A link to the standard form of DLT grant agreement can be found on the DLT Resources page at: www.rurdev.usda.gov/UTP_DLTResources.html

Section IV - The Complete Application

Tips:

Before you begin to work on your application, read the entire *Application Guide* including the *Toolkit* so that you have an overall sense of what is expected.

An application that does not include each required item listed in this section may be returned as ineligible for funding consideration. An application that does not include required scoring information will be scored as is.

Certain aspects of this competition may require you to respond to us by a deadline based on the date of our correspondence. Response deadlines are not extendable under any circumstances. Please ensure that you provide complete and accurate contact information in block f of the Standard Form-424, *Application for Federal Assistance*, so that we can contact you promptly by email and fax. Also, please inform us should any of your contact information change after you submit your application, such as the contact person, the signing or authorizing official of your organization, an email address, a phone number, or address.

We refer as “the signer” the person in the applicant organization who signs the SF-424, *Application for Federal Assistance*. The application should be signed by the executive officer who has the authority to commit the organization’s resources to carry out the project for the term of the project. Applications must provide some kind of documentation which demonstrates that the signer has the authority to do so. If the organization has delegated authority to sign to a certain official, please include in the application a statement or document which: 1) defines and authorizes the title of the official who has been delegated; and 2) the name of the individual whom currently occupies that position. Proper documentation is described in the instructions for Block 21 of SF-424 which you will find in the *Toolkit*.

Use the 2013 *Grant Application Guide Toolkit (Toolkit)*. It contains all the forms, worksheets, and sample certifications that you will need to assemble your application. You can find the *Toolkit* at the DLT Web site, www.rurdev.usda.gov/UTP_DLTResources.html.

When preparing your application, imagine that you are the Agency reviewer ensuring that the federal funds designated for the DLT Grant Program accomplish the goals stated in the law and regulations. Provide sufficient level of details in every section and the cohesiveness among sections that convey a clear understanding to the reviewer. Ensure that all of your end user sites and hubs are consistent throughout the application and that each budget item is correctly referenced in the pertinent section.

Focus your narrative on specific details about your communities rather than fill the application sections with generic information concerning the value of distance learning or telemedicine (such as magazine articles and web page printouts), unless they are specific to your area or choices of technology.

Place the application information under the proper Tab (as described below in the section *Putting It All Together*). Also, place the information supporting a scoring category together in the section for such category. Submit your applications in properly tabbed three-ring binders. If you submit electronically, place the Tab identifier and page number on each page of the application as if it were a physical application, so that we can assemble your application the way you intended. Doing this will not only facilitate the review process, but it will also portray a more coherent application to the reviewers. Disorganized applications will hinder the review process.

A. Standard Form 424 and Attachments

SF-424

DUNS and System Award Management registration – Please make certain your DUNS number is correct. Applicants are required to have registered with the System Award Management (SAM) site – <https://governmentcontractorregistration.org/register-now>.

The SF-424, (Standard Form 424, *Application for Federal Assistance* is required to apply for DLT grants. We combined the general instructions provided by OMB along with specific Agency instructions into one set, striking through the OMB instructions not applicable to the DLT Program. Place the completed SF-424 under Tab A of your application, along with the *Site Worksheet* and voluntary survey described below. The worksheet and survey are also included in the *Toolkit*. Important Note – The legal name of the applicant (SF 424, Block 8) must be consistent with the information provided under Tab B, *Legal Eligibility*. In particular, please note the additional guidance provided for consortia (a group of legal entities that have joined together for the purpose of a DLT project) in Section IV-B of this *Application Guide*.

Attachments to the SF-424

There are two attachments to the SF-424. One is a *Site Worksheet* (required) and the other is a *Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants* (optional). Some of the information requested on the Site Worksheets such as population, school districts and congressional districts can be obtained at the US Census web site.

Site Worksheet

Your accurate identification of project sites is essential for evaluating and scoring your project. Because the fill-in blocks on the “standard form” SF-424 have insufficient space for “project location” (DLT projects typically involve multiple sites), please use the *Site Worksheet* to respond to the information requested in Blocks 14, 15, & 16 of the SF-424.

We have two main types of DLT projects, fixed site and non-fixed sites. Please ensure you use the proper set of worksheets (*Site Worksheet*, *Rurality Worksheet*, and *NSLP Worksheet*) for the type of application. The non-fixed type of application will be discussed in detail later in this section. Guidance on End User Sites and End-Users

The intent of the DLT Program is to benefit the residents of rural areas. The definition of ‘end-user’ in the regulation indicates that only rural facilities that are eligible for DLT funding. These facilities include rural schools, libraries, training centers and other educational institutions as well as rural hospitals, primary care centers, and other rural community facilities.

The essential feature that makes a system eligible for funding under our grant program is a live-real-time video connection between teacher and student or between doctor and patient. We consider this real time connection to be the essential feature that defines distance learning or telemedicine.

For the purposes of the DLT Program, distance learning or telemedicine benefits originate at a hub, and are received by rural users through end user sites, or through mobile services, such as provided by paramedics or home health professionals.

Site Worksheet for Fixed Site Applications

Using the Site Worksheet located in the DLT Toolkit, list your sites starting with the hub sites. Show the complete and formal name of the site. If you use an abbreviation, use it consistently throughout the balance of the application.

Identify the site location. The site location must have a street (or highway) address that can be located on a map. If the location is not in a town, per se, it may be located in a community that has a name, and that name may be recognized by the U.S. Census as a “place”. This term will be more important in the *Rurality Worksheet*, where you will need the Census population for the town, or the “place” where the end user site is located.

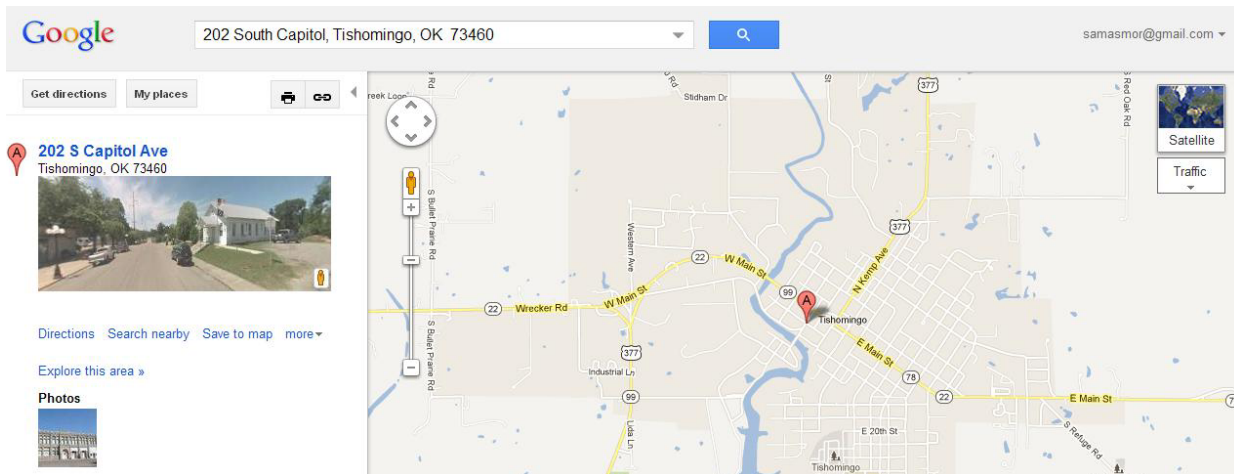
Since both the *Site Worksheet* and the *Rurality Worksheet* require maps, it is important to differentiate the two. The purpose of the *Site Worksheet* is to identify the exact street location of your site, and the town or *place* in which it is located, if any. The purpose of the *Rurality Worksheet* is to derive a score estimate based on the population of the town or *place* for each end user site. DLT reviewers may also refer to your Rurality Worksheet maps while looking for evidence of isolation and the lack of proximity to urban centers.

Most sites will be located in a town or *place*. However, if a site is so rural that its location is a place not recognized by the Census, you must show in your map the town or Census-recognized *place* that is nearest to your end user site location.

Google maps or similar online mapping utility provides a sufficient detail to verify a location and to visually identify the address given to a town or *place*.

We have chosen the town of Tishomingo, Oklahoma for our example.

In the example below using Google maps, it takes a simple search and a screen-print image to capture the address of the site and establish the name of the town as part of the overall map image and Google page. To do this, one has to zoom out until the Google marker for the address and the town name are both displayed. The Google search bar shows the address, thus making an association which visually verifies the town with the address: 202 South Capitol, Tishomingo, OK 73460



At this point, we recommend that you verify that the town being displayed is, in fact, recognized by the Census.

Go to the FactFinder2 main page, <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

Select Advanced Search from the menu on the top bar.

In the main part of the screen, you will see the following queue under boxed item 1:

“Enter search terms and an optional geography” with 2 blank text boxes underneath.

In the space “topic or table name” type the term *2010 SF1 100% Data*.

In the space “state, county or place” type the name of the town for which you are looking.



Even before we finish typing the word ‘Tishomingo’ FactFinder2 responded with a pop-up window with a list of options (often adding the word “city” or “town” after the name you typed-in).

This may not be the way the town is usually referred to, but it is how Census recognizes the town.

If your town name search does not immediately show up on the pop-up list, and you are fairly certain that it should, you may have to take another search approach in FactFinder2.

Please refer to the FactFinder2 instructions in the *Rurality* Section “Finding the Population of a Town or Place Name Using the Census FactFinder2”. There is a search request that can provide an exhaustive list of all related town names that are registered in the 2010 Census. If you have to go to that extent to determine that the end user location is a Census recognized town, make note of your search results on the *Site Worksheet*.

If your community’s name does not show up as a Census recognized place you can mark the site ‘Census Rural’. There is a possibility that your community has a different name, but if there is no signage at all in the town or on the map, it is likely that it is not recognized by the Census (or the state). If so, again the location is considered ‘Census Rural’.

Site Worksheet continued: Designation, County, School District, and Congressional District
In the next column provide your designation of the type of site, *i.e.*, a pure hub, a combination hub/end-user, or a pure end-user. It is important that you properly designate the sites since pure hubs are not included in the *Rurality* or *NSLP* score calculations.

Provide the name of the county, school district, and Congressional District in which the site is located. One way to locate the school district information is to use the FactFinder2 mapping tool.

Go to the FactFinder2 main page, <http://factfinder2.census.gov>

Select Advanced Search from the menu on the top bar.

Once the new window appears, select “Geographies” from the blue-tinted panel on the left. That selection will fill into the Selection box on the top left titled “Your Selections”.

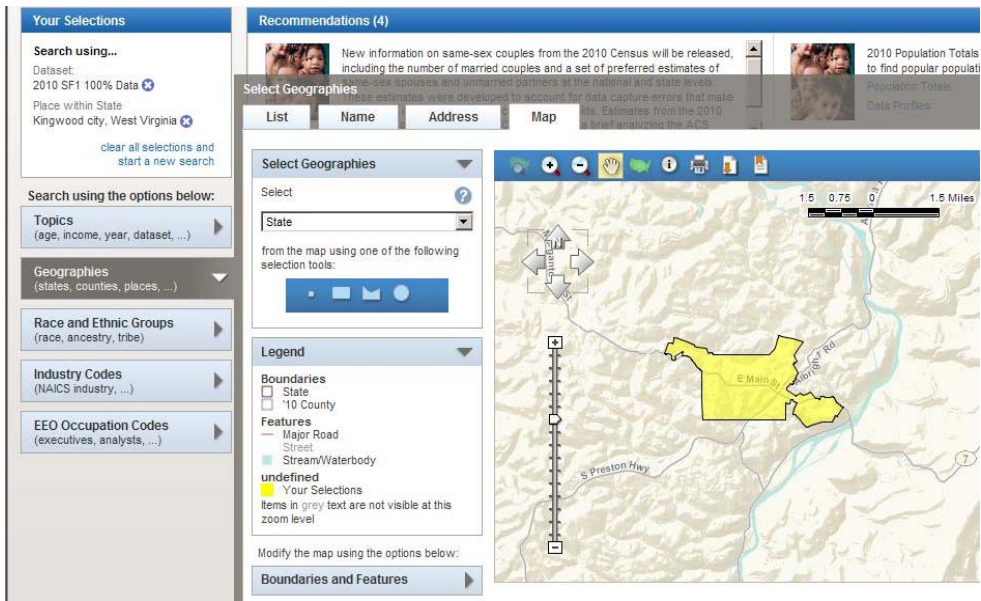
In the text box titled “Select a geographic type” select place-160

A drop-down list of states will appear. Select the state.

Another drop-down list will appear in the box below it, which lists all of the places recognized by the Census.

Select the name of the town for which you are searching. Our sample is Kingwood, WV.

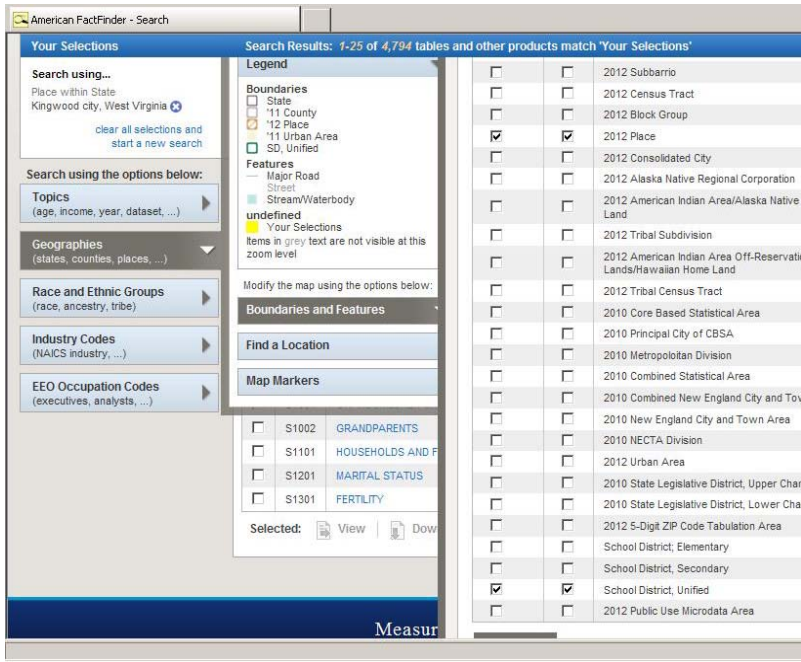
With that selection loaded into the search queue, click on the Map tab in the “Select Geographies” pop-up window.



FactFinder2 will render a map, centering on your selected town.

To get rid of the yellow top layer so that you can see underneath of it, go up to the *Your Selection* box on the top left and x-out of that search entry.

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Click on the Boundaries and Features blue panel/button at the bottom of the pop-up window

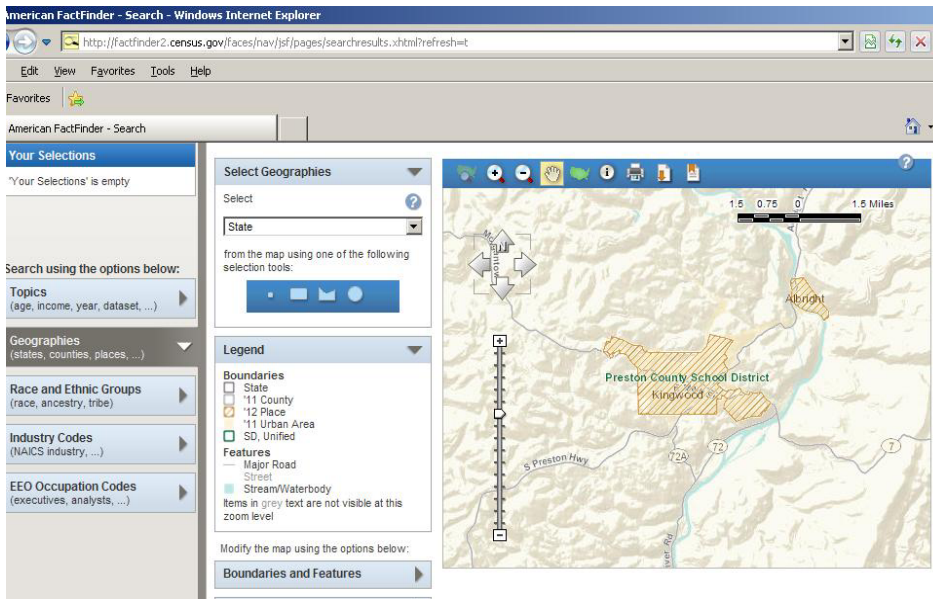
Click into the check-boxes of “2012 Place” & “School District Unified”, (see check-box example on left).

At the bottom of the pop-up window, click “update”

FactFinder2 will fill-in the school district name, and the town names around it.

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We had to x-out of our search word (Kingwood) in “My Selections” in order see under the highlighted area.

Doing that allowed us to expose the name of the town and its boundaries once we checked “2012 Place”, so that the name of the town shows through on the map.

To locate the Congressional District, you can use the US House of Representatives website <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>. Enter the zip code of whatever town you are researching.

When completed, place the *Site Worksheet(s)* and maps directly behind the SF-424 under Tab A of your application. Applications that do not provide all of the site information requested on the *Site Worksheet*, or that do not present the project sites consistently throughout the application would be too incoherent to be evaluated. As consequence, they could be returned to the applicant as ineligible for funding consideration.

Non-Fixed End User Sites

Most DLT projects operate at fixed sites such as schools or medical facilities. However, RUS usually receives telemedicine applications each year from projects where the end-user sites are not fixed. We have seen two basic types of telemedicine projects that come under this category: home health care monitoring systems and ambulance/first responder systems.

In both cases, the interaction between the health service provider and the end-user is transient. The end user equipment is used either part of a mobile unit, or is housed in a temporary location.

Home Health Care Monitoring Systems usually involve either the placement of medical monitoring equipment at the home or the use of portable equipment by visiting nurses or similar professionals visiting patients at their homes. This allows medical monitoring or the delivery of medical services into the home via telecommunications.

Ambulance or First Responder Systems usually involve on-board video and computer equipment so that the mobile unit has direct communications with a hospital and its professional staff. This equipment allows real-time visual and audio interactions which are instrumental in life-saving procedures and pre-admittance testing. The on-board equipment is often enabled to access electronic records (if needed) at the local hospital.

‘Hybrid Projects’

There may be situations where the applicant would like to combine a non-fixed site portion of the project with another portion of the project that has a fixed site, which one could generally describe as a *hybrid project*.

There is only one way for RUS to administratively offer a fixed-site structure for a non fixed site type application, i.e., a “hybrid project”:

Non-fixed site conversion

If your organization has a field office inside of your service territory, and it is located in a small town (10,000 or less) you could consider it a fixed-site and anchor your project to that site. If accepted by RUS, that site would serve as a host site by your organization, a location from where you may be distributing your monitoring equipment or mobile telemedical equipment in daily interactions as they naturally occur.

If your project has a site that would qualify in the manner described above, please contact the DLT Office prior to the application deadline to discuss a non-fixed site conversion.

If you do not have any field office, distribution center or operational facility in the rural part of your service territory then you must submit a standard non-fixed site application.

Rurality Worksheets for the Non-Fixed-Site Application Sub-types

All projects that are based on non-fixed sites are evaluated over the entire official service area. To be eligible for grant funding, all non-fixed site project types must have an officially defined service territory that can be unambiguously represented on a map. Applications that do not provide all of the service territory information requested associated with its *Site Worksheet*, and which do not show a consistent service territory throughout the application cannot be evaluated or scored and, as a consequence, and they will be returned to the applicant as ineligible for funding consideration.

For non-fixed site applications use the first few lines of the *Non-Fixed Site Worksheet* to enter the applicant’s actual physical locations. This can include headquarters operation, service centers, distribution facilities, garage locations, and offices that may be located outside of the defined service territory. Provide the name (that is commonly used) of the facility, its description and function within the organization or affiliate organization, and its full street address. Associated with each physical site, enter the corresponding name of each county, school district and Congressional District if the site is located in the applicant’s service territory.

After listing the applicant’s physical locations, the non-fixed site application is to use the next (or remaining) rows of the Non-Fixed Site Worksheet to enter the county or counties that are in the applicant’s service territory. The name of the county will be entered in the county column (2nd column). In the 1st column (which your used for Service Center Sites) enter the term “Service Territory” to indicate that you are now listing the counties in your overall service territory. Next to “Service Territory”, indicate whether the entire county or part of the county is in your service territory.

In the same row in which you are listing your county, list the school district or districts that are in that county, and are part of your service territory. If there is more than one school district, use a new row to list each school district repeating the name of the county. List the Congressional Districts associated

with the county. (The Congressional Districts do not have to correspond with their boundaries to the school districts).

Refer to the Census FactFinder2 instructions in the previous Fixed Site Worksheet section for finding school district and Congressional District information.

For the service area of all non-fixed site projects:

Attach a thorough narrative description of the territory to the *Non-Fixed-Site Worksheet*.

Also attach a map showing: 1) the official, defined boundary as described, for example, in the organization's charter; 2) marked locations of all physical locations listed on the *Site Worksheet* referencing the corresponding numbers in the list.

B. Legal Eligibility - Legal Existence - Authority to Contract

Eligibility Criteria

You must provide evidence with respect to your legal eligibility, legal existence, and legal authority to contract with The United States Government (See 7 CFR 1703):

1. Legal Eligibility: An applicant must be legally organized as an incorporated organization or partnership, an Indian tribe or tribal organization, as defined in 25 U.S.C. 450b, a state or local unit of government, a consortium, or other legal entity, including a private corporation organized on a for-profit or not-for-profit basis. Evidence of tax status from the Internal Revenue Service or a state department of taxation is not evidence of legal eligibility.
2. Legal Existence: You must provide us with acceptable evidence of your legal eligibility. Such evidence includes a certification as to legal existence from the Secretary of State in the applicant's state of incorporation, a certified copy of the applicant's Articles of Incorporation, or a copy of the state or local statute establishing an applicant. Evidence of tax status from the Internal Revenue Service or a state department of taxation is not evidence of legal existence.
3. Legal Authority to Contract with United States Government: You must provide written evidence of your legal authority to contract with the Federal Government. Such evidence includes a copy of the applicant's bylaws or Articles of Incorporation, applicable state or local statutes, a resolution from the applicant's board of directors, or an opinion of counsel showing that the applicant has the legal power to contract with the government. The provision of such a document in and of itself, a copy of the applicant's bylaws for example, does not provide evidence of the authority. The document text must make specific reference to the authority. Evidence of recent federal grants or other contracts with the federal government do provide this evidence. If a consortium lacks the legal capacity to contract, each individual entity must contract with RUS on its own behalf.

It is important that we know the exact name of the legal entity applying for the grant. For example, some applicants have provided evidence that a related entity such as the school board has legal authority to contract with the Federal government. Such evidence does not demonstrate the legal existence of the school district that is the applicant or of the school district's ability to contract with the government. **Applications that do not demonstrate both the applicant's legal existence as an entity that is eligible to apply for a grant and its legal authority to contract with the United States Government will be returned as ineligible.**

Use care in preparing your responses to the eligibility criteria shown above because the information goes directly to your eligibility to apply. This is especially true for an applicant whose legal name differs from its public name, whose legal name or status has changed in recent years, or who is applying as a consortium. Bear in mind that the applicant shown in block 8 of the SF 424, *Application for Federal Assistance*:

- Must be legally eligible to receive the award, and
- Takes legal ownership over items acquired under the grant.

These considerations are particularly important if you are applying as a consortium. As defined in 7 CFR 1703, a consortium is a combination or group of entities formed to undertake the purposes for which the DLT award is requested. However, consortia can range in formality from an established legal entity to an *ad hoc* group with no collective identity. What concerns RUS is whether your consortium can contract with us. You should consult with your legal counsel to determine whether your consortium has the legal capacity to contract with the Federal government because it will have consequences should your application be chosen for an award.

Legal Ability to Contract with Federal Government – If your consortium has this ability, the responses to the Eligibility Criteria above should be for the consortium as a legal entity, not for any of the various entities that comprise the consortium. Also, a copy of the consortium agreement should be provided with the application if such a document has been created.

No Legal Ability to Contract with Federal Government – Some consortia, despite having a formal existence, cannot contract with the Federal Government. More common is an informal consortium or group of legal entities that have joined together primarily or solely for the purpose of a DLT Grant application without having a formal consortium identity.

When a consortium does not have the ability to contract with us, there are two possible approaches to applying and the applicant should be aware of what that means both for the application process and for the execution of a grant agreement should such a consortium receive an award.

1. Apply under one Entity, not as a Consortium – Under this approach, one entity would apply and the eligibility of the applicant would be based on that entity's legal eligibility. The consortium would not be considered. For example, if there are three hospitals (A, B & C) taking part in a DLT Project, Hospital A would apply as the legal entity with sole responsibility for executing the project.

Award Process - Bear in mind that if this approach is used, Hospital A would be the only party to the grant agreement and it would have to maintain ownership and control of everything acquired under the grant. Also, the Certifications submitted by Hospital A under Tab H would have to cover all sites in the project including the sites of Hospitals B and C. We have found that such an approach is usually unacceptable to all parties, in this case, to all three hospitals.

2. Apply under a Lead Entity as a Consortium without Contract Authority – Because it would be a burden to require applicants to go through the legal process of establishing a consortium that can contract with us simply to apply, we accept applications from less formal consortia. We do this with the understanding that should the applicant be selected for awarding a grant, the consortium arrangement would be formalized in some manner at a later time.

Under this approach, the applicant submits its application under a consortium name/lead entity. The consortium would designate one member to be the lead entity and provide the eligibility criteria

described below for that lead entity. If there are three hospitals (A, B, & C), they could apply as *Three Hospital Group*/Hospital A, where *Three Hospital Group* is the consortium name and Hospital A is the lead entity.

Make certain that the lead entity meets the eligibility criteria described above because during the application process, the eligibility of the project's application will be based on the eligibility of that lead entity. For example, consider a project in which six public schools will join with two private schools, one of which is a single proprietorship. If this consortium were to choose the single proprietorship as the lead entity, the application would be ineligible for funding consideration because individual proprietorships are not eligible for DLT Grants. Also, make certain that each entity submits a set of Certifications under Tab H.

Award Process – Should a consortium without contract authority be selected for an award, there are two approaches possible for the execution of the grant documents.

- a. The consortium can establish itself as an entity with the legal capacity to contract with the Federal Government after the award is made. In such a case, the grant agreement would be executed with this newly created consortium. This is the recommended approach.
- b. Otherwise, each individual entity constituting the consortium must be a party to the grant agreement and those entities are jointly and severally responsible for the entire project. In practice, the grant agreement is signed and executed by each entity with the lead entity being responsible for requesting grant funds and reporting requirements. In effect, the grant agreement creates a temporary consortium specific to the DLT project.

C. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary gives reviewers their first overall view of the project area, the problems that residents face, and how the proposed project will address those problems. This is your opportunity to discuss the core aspects of the project. It should contain a **concise** description of the project including:

- A two-paragraph abstract that describes your project concisely. Include any geographic or demographic features that distinguish your project from others of its type and any innovative or especially needed services or courses offered. Make a projection of the number of people that will benefit from the system per year. If there is a connection to an institution, hospital, university or community college, mention the institution by name.
- An explanation of who produced the grant application and the relation of the grant writer to the applicant's organization. In other words, was the application prepared by applicant staff, an outside grant writer, an equipment vendor, or some other entity?

Working with Vendors in the Application Process

With respect to equipment vendors, we are aware that sometimes applicants make arrangements with vendors to prepare their application with the understanding that should the applicant win an award, the *awardee* will obtain its equipment from that vendor. Please be aware that we do not recognize and will not enforce such a *quid pro quo*. We expect awardees to purchase equipment that best meets the needs of their project at the best possible price. Vendors that choose to assist applicants with their application should understand that they do so at their own risk.

D. Project Information

Guidance in the Eligible Use of DLT Funds

Eligible Grant Purposes are identical to Eligible In-kind Match Purposes. In other words, to be considered as an eligible in-kind match, budget items that are designated as in-kind must be items which would be eligible for grant funding if included as part of a grant request.

All items to be funded with match or grant must be obtained from an organization other than the applicant, its affiliates or other entities participating in the applicant's DLT project as hubs, hub/end-users, or end-users, i.e., items must be procured from a third party.

An organization that is also a vendor is eligible to participate in a DLT project as an applicant or other participant. However, as an applicant it cannot act in a vendor capacity and sell any items or services to the project, nor can any affiliate.

The drawing down of grant funding, or crediting of in-kind matching funds will be based on invoices submitted to the awarded organization.

When the applicant obtains eligible items or services from a third party, it is in the applicant's interest to obtain the lowest price and the invoice is evidence of the actual price.

Items acquired before the application deadline are not eligible for grant or match.

Salaries and administrative costs of the applicant are not an eligible purpose.

The DLT Grant Program is primarily focused on providing equipment that operates via telecommunications to organizations that provide telemedicine and distance learning to rural end-users.

The DLT Grant Program does not fund the communications links between sites.

The DLT Grant Program does not fund Internet connections.

Grants (and eligible matching funds) can be expended only for the costs associated with the initial capital assets associated with the project. This means that the capital assets must be new. For example, the renewal of an existing lease for equipment or educational programming would not be an eligible purpose.

Eligible Purposes for Grant or Match

There are three categories of eligible purposes:

1. The first includes acquiring **eligible equipment for eligible purposes**. Acquisition can be made by purchase or lease. If leased, the cost of the lease during the three year life of the grant is eligible.

The following are examples of eligible equipment. This list is not exhaustive. Neither does it convey blanket eligibility. A computer is not automatically eligible. It must be used for an eligible purpose. Remember also that the purpose of the DLT Grant program is to deliver education or medicine between remote sites via telecommunications, not simply to furnish educational or medical technology.

- Computer hardware and software (see Budget section on cloud computing)
- Audio and video equipment
- Computer network components
- Terminal equipment
- Data terminal equipment
- Interactive audio/video equipment
- Extended warranties on eligible equipment up to the 3 year life of the grant
- Inside wiring

In general, equipment not electronically interconnected to the grant and match funded equipment is not eligible. The application must demonstrate both that the predominant purpose (50% or more of use) of every line-item in the grant and match budget meets the DLT Grant definition of distance learning and/or telemedicine, and further, that none of the use is for ineligible purposes.

2. The second provides for **first-time** acquisition of **instructional programming** that is a capital asset (including the purchase or lease of instructional programming already on the market). Renewals of instructional programming are not eligible. Also, expenses (such as those for tuition, fees for coursework on a per course basis, or fees for cultural events or virtual field trips) are not capital assets. As such they are not eligible.

3. The third includes **technical assistance and instruction for using eligible equipment (TA&I)**, including any related software; developing and modification of instructional programming that is a capital asset and providing engineering or environmental studies relating to the establishment or expansion of the phase of the project to be financed with the grant. The costs for **this category cannot exceed 10% of the grant amount requested or 10% of the eligible matching funds calculated separately**. For example, if your proposed category three match is in-kind, it is limited to 10% of the proposed in-kind match.

Ineligible Purposes for Grant or Match

None of the following purposes are eligible (see 7 CFR 1703.123):

- Salaries, wages, or employee benefits to medical or educational personnel;
- Salaries or administrative expenses of the applicant or the project, including overhead costs;
- Administrative expenses of the applicant include the normal costs of operation;
 - *For example, software designed to keep track of student attendance or hospital billing is an administrative expense, not a function of distance learning or telemedicine. Another example is operational supplies such as paper, blank CDs, or spare ink cartridges. So is rental of space, the cost of utilities, and maintenance, except for OEM (a reseller's) extended warranties as described above under eligible purposes. Some federal grant programs allow a percentage of funding for overhead costs. The DLT Program does not.*
- Acquiring, installing, or constructing telecommunications transmission facilities;
 - *DLT projects are intended to deliver education or medicine between remote sites via telecommunications, but they do not cover the transmissions facilities themselves. DLT eligible purposes end at the terminal equipment that connects to a transmission facility. Each year applicants request funds for wireless transmission systems or costs for Internet Access or other types of "connectivity." DLT grants fund equipment that operates via telecommunications, but it does not fund the telecommunications itself, either through transmission equipment or purchased connectivity. These are not eligible purposes for grant or match.*
- Recurring or operating project expenses or costs such as fees for telecommunications, Internet, electric service, rent, or tuition;
- *Leases to obtain equipment as described above under **Eligible Purposes for Grant and Match** are not considered recurring costs.*
- Medical equipment that does not have telemedicine as its principal and essential function;
- Purchasing equipment that will be owned by a local exchange carrier or another telecommunications service provider **unless** that service provider is the applicant;
 - *Remember that entities financed through loans from Rural Development Utilities Programs are not eligible for DLT grants.*
- Duplicating facilities already in place which provide distance learning or telemedicine services;
- Reimbursing your organization or others for costs incurred prior to the date of application deadline for this year's program;
 - *Applicants can begin the acquisition process by **placing an order** after the application deadline. Should they win an award, they can be reimbursed for such acquisitions. However, items received after the deadline, but ordered before, are not eligible for reimbursement.*
- DLT application preparation costs;
- Projects that only provide links between people located at the same physical facility;
 - *This includes projects where several facilities are involved, but all the links are within each facility.*
- Site development including destruction or alteration of buildings;
 - *Equipment specific modifications needed for the project to work such as sound proofing and lighting for a video conferencing room are eligible, although modern video-conferencing equipment does not require extensive room modifications. Building an addition, knocking out walls, or replacing an electric service is not.*
- Purchasing land or buildings or for building construction;
- Projects located in areas covered by the Coastal Barrier Resources Act;

- Any other purposes not specifically contained in 7 CFR 1703.121;
- Any other purpose that the Administrator has not specifically approved;

Except as otherwise provided in 7 CFR 1703.112, grant funds shall not be used to finance a project, in part, when success of the project is dependent upon the receipt of additional financial assistance under Part 1703, Subpart E, or is dependent upon the receipt of other funding that is not assured.

Urban Sites

If a non-rural site is included in list of end user sites please discuss and disclose the extent to which a that site would benefit from the project in the application narrative section D-1. Keep in mind that DLT reviewers when scoring an application in the subjective criteria will take into account the proximity of user sites to urbanized areas, and will examine all information pertaining to sites designated as ‘pure hubs’ in the project and will re-assign them in the application as hub/end user sites if there appears to be end user functions at that site.

If portions of your project border on urban or suburban areas, some of your end users may not fit into the definition of rural. The Agency reserves the right to evaluate the extent to which the benefit of services flows to urban areas rather than rural and to score those applications accordingly. There may be individual cases in an application where at one end user location (fixed site), or at one portion of a county (non fixed site) the demographics lean to urban or suburban. In other cases hub equipment is requested with very little equipment requested at the rural sites. However, in all cases we need to know whether the hub is actually serving a wider network with urbanized sites that are already well-equipped. Please remember that a site receiving benefits is an end user site and needs to be included in the application. This will probably affect your *Rurality* score, but does not mean your application is ineligible (unless the overall *Rurality* score is 20 or less). Nonetheless, it is important to portray an accurate representation of who will benefit from the project.

Proposals for “On-Line” Services

From time to time, we receive applications from educational institutions that wish to provide a curriculum “on-line”. If an applicant is considering a project along these lines, they need to keep in mind that the live real-time interactive video connection that is required for funding of a distance learning project.

No Defined Service Area

An applicant that wishes to provide online services with no defined service area may try to justify its project as a service which can be targeted to individual users in rural areas. Without a defined service territory, such projects cannot be accurately scored for rural benefit (*Rurality*) because the beneficiaries can be anywhere, not just in rural areas.

Hub Sites

A pure hub (by definition) receives no direct benefit at its site from the distance learning or tele-medical service being offered. The site is usually a connection management point or it is exclusively an educational or medical source of distance learning or telemedicine. Because no medical or educational benefit flows to a pure hub, we do not include it in the *Rurality* and *NSLP* scoring.

For a pure hub, the application should describe and demonstrate that no end user benefit flows to the hub site. In the absence of such information the DLT agency reviewer will make an independent determination based on our overall experience with similar projects and uses of equipment. The following are examples of pure hubs, although the third example gives an illustration of a site that would not be funded in its entirety.

Pure Hub Examples:

- A server is located in a school administration building. The server's entire function is to control distance learning equipment remotely located at each of 15 schools in the district. In this case, the Administration building site is a pure hub. The Administration Building is excluded from the scoring and each of the 15 schools is scored as an end-user.
- An urban school provides classes to five other schools that are shown as end-users on the *Rurality* and *NSLP Worksheets*. The urban school provides classes to students at the five schools but generally does not receive any courses from them. The DLT equipment placed at the urban school is dedicated to the five rural schools in the project. No grant or match items are used at the urban school to provide courses to or receive courses from within the school or from schools that are not shown as part of the DLT project. The urban school is a pure hub. The five rural schools are scored as end-users on the *Rurality* and *NSLP Worksheets*.
- A regional Educational Resource Center serves students at all 120 public schools in their region. No students are served at the Resource Center itself. The applicant proposes to install hub equipment, such as a high capacity video bridge, video control systems (VCS), a content server, firewall transversal units, and several desktop video conferencing systems for centrally located instructors to use. Only half of the schools the Resource Center will be providing distance learning for are considered rural. The Resource Center is requesting the DLT Program to fund a portion of its system.
- This center is clearly a hub. However, because the Resource Center will use the new equipment to serve a substantial percent of students who are not rural, it poses a complication in the project proposal. The DLT Program is intended for rural projects serving rural communities. The competitive standing of a proposal will be greatly reduced if it includes expensive items from which it appears that the rural end users will only partially benefit. The applicant could propose a higher match, but that would only increase the score of the application, and still not increase the benefit to rural residents. The only way to offset this is to increase the benefits to rural residents in the system delivery itself, by expanding the reach of the system to new rural sites, to increase the scope of rural coverage, and/or upgrading the end user equipment at the rural schools it is serving. That would project more benefit to the rural users in the overall application. Reviewers will take into consideration this kind of 'partial beneficiary' scenario, when scores are determined. In situations where rural end users will receive only partial benefit from a larger system requesting funds, the applicant would be advised to rethink the project, and consider making a larger investment at rural end user locations as part of their overall application strategy.

Hub/End-User

A hub/end-user, as the hyphenated name suggests, performs both functions, bridging, scheduling, managing content and other hub activities, and also accommodates end users, people taking classes or receiving medical treatment at that site who are using videoconferencing desktop units and other types of end user equipment. A hub/end-user is considered the same as an end user for scoring purposes. The Agency reserves the right to evaluate the potential of end user benefit that flows to urban area and may score accordingly reduce grant and match funds budgeted for the benefit of urban end users when that benefit is not necessary to benefit rural end users or incidental to the benefit to rural end-users.

Hub/End-User Example:

- An urban-based university medical center wants to create a teleradiology system along with seven rural hospitals. The equipment at the university hospital will be used to connect with national centers of expertise for the benefit of both the patients at the university medical center and the seven rural hospitals. The urban hospital will also use the equipment to treat patients within the hospital. Because benefits flow to end users at the urban-based university medical center, it is a hub/end-user and must be accounted for. In such a case, the site would be included in the *Rurality* and NSLP calculation.
- A rural high school will receive foreign language and higher mathematics courses via videoconferencing equipment that is part of the DLT project. These courses will come from a larger high school that is a hub/end-user. The rural school will not provide any classes to others and is classified as a pure end-user.
- An urban high school is part of an existing distance learning video network that originally included both rural and urban high schools in the same educational service region. The regional organization is submitting a new proposal that seeks funding to add new rural sites previously not part of any distance learning system. The applicant's proposal also includes a firewall transversal and video control system which would allow the network to tap into classes from a neighboring community college. This application would need to include *Rurality* and NSLP scores from all of the end user sites in their calculations because all sites would benefit from improvements made from the central equipment hub, even from end user sites where no equipment has been requested.

Distance Learning (What is not' Distance Learning and 'What is not' Telemedicine)

Distance learning as defined by the regulation emphasizes the connection of students and teachers at remote sites. It implies that the project incorporate a curriculum with measurable results delivered via telecommunications. Not every use of technology is distance learning. Some examples of this include:

- General computer and whiteboard acquisitions. Computers and whiteboards are becoming ubiquitous general use appliances. For example, it is increasingly common that schools attempt to provide every student a computer, regardless of whether that school has any distance learning in their curriculum. General equipment acquisitions cannot be automatically considered distance learning equipment.

- Wireless connectivity. As with computers, many schools are now installing wireless connectivity. These systems are often used for internal communications within a facility, not necessarily for distance learning or telemedicine. As such, the applicant would have to make the case that the proposed wireless installation will be used to support the distance learning or telemedicine. In the TSP, the applicant would specify percentage of use for grant purposes.
- Attendance software. Attendance is an administrative function. Administrative costs are not an eligible purpose.
- Ordinary access to the Internet, *i.e.*, not part of a structured curriculum obtained via the Internet. Giving a student access to the Internet for “research” is not distance learning any more than giving them access to the library is formal education. The e-rate program is targeted directly at the goal of wiring schools and connecting them to the Internet. The DLT Program is focused on connecting students and teachers at remote locations.
- Video monitors that could potentially be used for distance learning throughout a school, but without using the monitors where there is interactive video communication with remote sites, the monitors would not be eligible in their usage.
- Video-streaming of archived classes recorded at one school and viewed at the same school on a server located at that school. Video streaming of archived material can be a valuable adjunct to a distance learning system, but in isolation it is not distance learning because the transfer does not involve telecommunications between sites.

Telemedicine

Telemedicine as defined by the regulation involves the delivery of medical care from medical professionals at one site to patients and their medical professionals at other sites via telecommunications. Telemedicine should reflect some benefit to rural residents either in reduced travel time or access to services not otherwise available. An applicant may propose a certain technology to be used at a rural hospital. If before the technology is installed, a rural patient visits the doctor’s office in a hospital for a consultation, and after the technology is installed, the patient still visits the same doctor’s office for a consultation, and the technology doesn’t provide any delivery of additional medicine from a remote site, the project doesn’t provide any telemedicine benefit to rural residents. Some examples that in isolation are not telemedicine include:

- A computerized patient billing system where the physician and patient are at the same site. This fails on two counts. First, the billing system does not deliver medicine. It is an administrative function and administrative costs are not an eligible purpose. Even if this function were eligible, the interaction is between doctor and patient at the same site. There is no medical benefit delivered to the rural resident in terms of reduced travel time or access to previously unavailable services that occurs through telecommunications.
- Wireless connectivity, when it is used in the absence of telemedicine. When wireless systems are installed for internal communications within a facility and to support a telemedicine function, the wireless system is not eligible.

- General Technology Improvements - Many technological improvements can greatly benefit operations at a hospital or clinic, bringing benefits that are primarily internal to their operations and to patients who visit that hospital or clinic. For example, Electronic Intensive Care Units are being installed both at rural hospitals for remote monitoring, and at urban hospitals for internal use. The former would be eligible, the latter would not.
- Equipment not electronically interconnected with the equipment that comprises the telemedicine project. For example, a portable computer used for data entry by a medical professional at a patient's home and carried back to another point where the data is transferred to another system. No telemedicine occurs at the home because there is no telecommunications link out of the home.
- Connecting physicians at home so they can attend to paperwork or consult records, but not for use in delivery of medicine from that site to another.
- The digitization of health records and medical images (x-rays, mammograms, etc.), by itself, is not telemedicine. It is the transporting of digital images and records to support a live interaction between a doctor/ medical professional and the patient at a remote location which would define this kind of electronic medical or health records project as telemedicine. If both purposes will be served in the project, then the applicant must attribute a percentage of use as telemedicine in their Telecommunications System Plan (see below).
- Along the same lines electronic medical/health records is not telemedicine if the purpose is to modernize the hospital for billing and scheduling function alone. If billing and scheduling is part of an electronic medical/health records telemedicine project, then the applicant must attribute a percentage of use as telemedicine in their Telecommunications System Plan (see below).
- Any other equipment that is used for communications which only takes place between buildings within one multi-building site ("on-campus" systems) do not fit the definition of telemedicine. The communications must cover distances that allow the patient and the rural provider who treats the patient the benefit of access to resources at a distance.
- A picture archiving and communications system (PACS) is not telemedicine if the technology doesn't supporting a tele-medical link between patient and doctor at a distance. PACS is an example of a technological replacement of earlier technology, one that often has a predominant "on-campus" benefit. For example, when a hospital replaces its analog radiology facility to PACS, it is often just a change from film to digital to electronic storage, with little to no application of transporting that data to support a telemedicine program.

D-1. Telecommunications System Plan & Scope of Work

Background

The term, *telecommunications*, as it is used here in the Telecommunications System Plan refers more specifically to a Distance Learning and/or Telemedicine System Network.

A successful DLT grant application includes a well-planned TSP, starting with a diagram or map of the proposed system overlaid with a geographic map of the service area. Also included in the TSP are other diagrams (if necessary), technical descriptions, and a narrative accounting of each item the budget.

The TSP shows the sites (hubs, hub/end-users, or end/users) that will participate in the project and where the equipment will be located. It shows how the equipment is interconnected and how the distance learning or telemedicine benefits flow from the hub sites to the rural end user sites.

A description of the **types of distance learning or telemedicine services** proposed and whether those services will be offered via a fixed-site project or to a service territory where the sites vary over time, such as a home health monitoring service. Remember that DLT projects must propose specific projects to provide distance learning and/or telemedicine to specific people. The DLT Program does not fund speculative proposals, i.e., the purchase of equipment or software whose function will be determined later.

Telecommunications System Plan Map/Diagram

Attach a map or a drawing which is a spatial representation of the service area encompassing the project, displaying an overlay of your proposed distance learning or telemedicine system, including hub sites and end users. This map can be displayed as a series of maps containing an overview, followed by close-up maps of individual sites.

- For fixed site projects, each site, hub and end user, must be represented on the map. This representation need not be to scale, but it must be representational of your project, not generic. In past years, some applicants have supplied only a network diagram of their proposed system, absent of any geographic features. These generic network diagrams, usually depicting some kind of *campus architecture* are by themselves insufficient. However, applicants can provide a network diagrams (without geographic references) if they can also provide geographic maps that reference the diagram. Nevertheless, an application that does not contain a map that shows each site could be difficult to evaluate thereby losing competitive value when compared to applications that present visual clarity of their project.
- For non-fixed sites projects, the application must include a map of its official service territory as part of the *Site Worksheet* under Tab A. Remember that this must be the official service territory as demonstrated by public information. For example, if the organization serves all of Lakeview County as chartered by the County, provide a map showing the entirety of the county, not just the rural parts.
- A general description of the distance learning or telemedicine equipment proposed for the project including interconnected sites for which no grant or match funds are budgeted.
- A detailed description of each line-item in the budget.
- Please make certain that the line-items are specific, not lump sums that cannot be evaluated as to eligibility or reasonableness of cost. Provide specifics, such as the brand and model number, i.e., “VideoKing TX-90,” as opposed to “One Video System.” Provide detail about items such as “installation,” “interfacing,” “integration,” “programming,” or other generic terms that

convey no specific information about what is being proposed.

- Identify the end user or hub site where the equipment will be installed.
- Some items requested for DLT funding will have more general uses than other equipment, which may have 100% distance learning or tele-medical purposes. For each item, specify the percentage of use that can be attributed to purposes that meet the DLT grant definition of distance learning and/or telemedicine, explain how you've determined those percentages and addressing the capabilities of the proposed equipment/software. **The percentage of use is only to be used for analysis as part of line item explanations. Do not breakout items in the actual budget by percentage of use.**
- Document your discussions with various technical sources, such as consultants, engineers, product vendors or internal technical experts.
- Address whether or not any part of the project will duplicate any adequate, established telemedicine or distance learning services already in operation. In particular, discuss how match and grant funding for this project, if approved, would complement previous efforts. Describe the status of previous projects and, in particular, the extent to which the funds have been drawn for eligible grant purposes. Please note that you will need to complete a *Non-duplication of Services* Certificate, which is part of the certification section. The form is located in the *Toolkit*.
- Identify any previous grants that the applicant has received from our Agency in the previous three grant cycles (2010, 2011 & 2012) and how they would affect the project proposed in the current application.
- This applies not only to prior grants received by the current applicant, but to grant funding that may have gone to any of the end-users in the current proposal via a grant received by another entity.
- Discuss how match and grant funding for this project, if approved, would complement previous efforts. **Specify the progress/status of any previous awards and the extent of grant and match funds expended toward completing those projects.**
- Discuss whether or not any of the sites in the current project are included as participants in another application for a Fiscal Year 2013 DLT Grant.
- In the absence of any explanation, overlaps in projects are assumed to be duplication and, as a consequence, scores could be negatively affected in the criterion of Needs and Benefits.

Scope of Work

Provide a narrative (with charts, if needed) explaining the Scope of Work. Make a clear and convincing presentation of how you will achieve the goals of your project. The scope of work completes the picture for the reviewer. It discusses how your organization proposes to proceed with the project. **An application that does not include a scope of work cannot be evaluated and could be returned as ineligible.** The scope of work must include, *at a minimum*, the following:

- The **specific activities** to be performed under the project;
- **Who** will carry out the activities;
- The **timeframes** for accomplishing the project objectives and activities (not knowing the exact months, you can use a month-by-month number count, i.e. *month 1, month 2, month 3, etc.* starting with the signing of the grant agreement).

D-2. Budget

Along with the TSP discussed above, the budget is one of the foundation documents of your application. The budget is a required document for RUS to evaluate an application. This section shows how to present a budget for your organization's proposed project.

- Your *Budget* should show each cost as a **line-item** similar to the sample below. The items listed and described in your TSP should track line-by-line with the entries in your budget so that reviewers can reference one list to the other to gain a more complete understanding of your grant requests.
- As instructed above in the TSP section, please break-out 'bundled' costs in your budget into individual working pieces. Do not combine items into lump sums that cannot be evaluated individually by the Agency. The individual parts have to be evaluated for cost comparison and program eligibility.
- If, in your project, you have to pay a user fee or a license fee that is part of the equipment's distributed processing application, or is associated with network cloud services or content processing, it must be presented as such in the application. If it is bundled with ordinary internet service, it will not be eligible for funding.
- Provide detail such as the brand and model number, *i.e.*, "VideoKing TX-90, \$5,600," as opposed to "One Video System, \$75,000 each site;" Installation," \$50,000; or "Wiring, \$100,000."
- As is discussed more thoroughly in **E-3, Leveraging, in Section IV of this Guide**, we strongly recommend that applicants use cash for their match and avoid in-kind matches.
- A monetary match is unambiguous as to its value and can be applied toward any eligible item in the entire budget. An in-kind match could be difficult to value.
- As a practical matter, there is no compelling reason for an applicant to propose an in-kind match. Any in-kind items to be eligible will have to be obtained by the applicant with cash after the application deadline. In other words, when an applicant proposes an in-kind match, it is in effect committing cash with which the proposed in-kind item will be purchased at some point after the application deadline. However, by proposing a specific in-kind item rather than cash, the accredited viability of the in-kind match is tied to the eligibility of that item. If that item is not eligible, the item would be removed from the budget and the proposed match associated with that item would disappear. This can happen to an in-kind expenditure if the Agency finds that it

is not integral to eligible DLT purposes as described in the application, or as outlined in the Application Guide and program regulations.

- As explained in the previous paragraph, disallowance of a proposed cash in-kind match would reduce the proposed match which can affect the *Leveraging* score and could even make an application ineligible, should the remaining match not meet the 15% minimum required under the DLT Program.
- A specific item cannot be designated for a “cash match”. Only in-kind match designates a singled-out an item for a match. Cash match refers to that applicant contribution or share of the total grant-funded project cost.
- For any in-kind match request, please use the *In-Kind Match Worksheet* described below. Items that are counted as in-kind do not get reimbursed.
- Remember that the crediting of a proposed in-kind match is dependent on the eligibility of that line-item as discussed above.

Budget Worksheets - The *Toolkit* provides three budget worksheets:

Main Budget Worksheet	Itemizes your request for grant funding for eligible purposes
Other Funds Worksheet	Tabulates operational expenses, salaries, and project items that are either ineligible for grant funds or purchased outside of the grant request. (Items not to be included in the Main Budget Worksheet.)
In-Kind Match Worksheet	Lists (eligible) items to be credited toward an in-kind match

PLEASE PROVIDE A DISK WITH A COPY OF YOUR BUDGET (AND OTHER WORKSHEETS) FROM THE FILL-IN PDF FILE IN THE TOOLKIT & INCLUDE IT IN YOUR APPLICATION.

Main Budget Worksheet

List each purchase, in line-item form, that is part of your grant request.

- Number each line-item in the first column.
- Do not list items that are on any other of the budget worksheets, i.e. do not include items being funded with “Other Funds”, and do not include any items that are being claimed as in-kind purchases on the Main Budget Worksheet.
- Group together items that will be placed at the same site and identify the site in the column ‘Site Name’.
- Provide a short description (detailed descriptions need be included in the TSP line-item list), a unit cost, the number of units, and the extended cost.
- At the bottom of the sheet is a block labeled *Budget Summary*. Line A, *Main Budget Worksheet*, is the total project budget. The number entered here should match the number entered in Block 18g of the SF-424, *Application for Federal Assistance*.

Paper/Electronic Hybrid Application – We recognize that many applicants transcribe our forms into electronic form. To assist in this, we are providing the *Budget Worksheets* in Excel. If you have prepared your *Budget* in Excel and are submitting a paper application, we encourage you to copy your *Worksheets* onto a CD or DVD and attach it to the application.

Other Funds Worksheet

The *Other Funds Worksheet* is where you list items that are essential to your project, but not eligible as either grant or match. Funds to pay for these items must come from sources other than the grant/match configuration, and must be accounted for with some kind of documentation showing proof of their availability. Documentation that demonstrates the operational funding availability and the availability of Other Funds for costs outside of the DLT Budget can be placed in Section D-3 Financial Information and Sustainability.

It is acceptable for the applicant to cover to cover these Other Funds costs, and to use as a source funding from private or government organizations. Be certain not to mix items in the DLT Budget request (grant and match) with items in Other Funds Worksheet. For example, if your project has an expensive piece of equipment you may feel inclined to split its cost with partial grant/match monies and partial private monies (outside of the grant/match). Do not propose a split funding scenario. Fund the equipment item fully with private funding, or fully with the DLT grant/match. If you are concerned about a piece of equipment and its high cost with questionable benefit for rural residents, then increase the match amount, or purchase it with monies outside of the grant/match configuration.

Budgeting Example

The applicant, Countryseat Community College (Countryseat CC), plans a distance learning project with three high schools; Woodland, Valley, and Southland.

Countryseat CC will use the budgeted video conferencing equipment to provide dual credit and advanced placement courses to the three high schools, but will not receive distance learning classes from them. This makes Center City CC a pure hub, so can be excluded from the *Rurality* and *NSLP* scoring.

Their server equipment will be listed on the main budget as a request, since it is essential to manage the video connections to the rural high schools.

Southland has several teachers who teach courses unavailable at the two rural schools, and by acquiring the necessary equipment Southland would be able to both receive benefits from the project and to originate classes for the project. This would make Southland **a hub/end user site**. It is a hub site since their teachers originate courses for the other schools in the system. It is also an end user site because they are connected to the project receiving benefit from the main hub and its resources. All of the schools involved and the local community college have organized as a consortium. When looking at the prospect of applying for a DLT grant they considered the following:

- Southland High is located in a relatively wealthy and urban area (> 20,000).

- The consortium planners would rather NOT include Southland as an end user because its relative urban setting and more prosperous economic factors would lower the overall project score.
- Geographically, all of these counties are in the same area, with Southland County bordering on the more rural Woodland County, so what one would consider the *natural architecture* of the project and the localized network, it would be unreasonable and ethically incorrect NOT to include Southland as one of the logical beneficiaries of the project.
- Even if the applicant would pay for all of Southland's distance learning equipment, thereby not requesting any grant funds for the site, Southland would STILL be an end user site because they would be receiving benefit from the community college courses AND (referring back to #3 above) they are part of the *natural architecture* of the project.
- Originally, Valley High School (because it is further away, and not in the same county) was NOT part of the planned distance learning project. But because of the inclusion of Southland High, the project planners decided to 'pull in' a more distant, more rural site to increase the project's overall score, and their possibility of getting the RUS grant.

The project will provide all three schools with essentially identical equipment. Each will get a distance learning classroom and lab equipped with video conferencing equipment. In addition, the schools will install computers in other rooms. These will be used for a variety of purposes, including word processing and ordinary access to the Internet – which by themselves are not eligible. However, they will also be patched into the distance learning network, and used to retrieve courses and material presented during classes which were captured with the content server. **Because at least 50% of the computer's purpose will be used in participation with the distance learning project they (correctly) are included in the budget.**

Main Budget Worksheet

Line Item	Site Name ²	Description	Unit Cost	No.	Extended Cost
1	Woodland HS	Poliburg Intl 1776 Video Codec	\$9,675	1	\$9,675
2	Woodland HS	DV 2020X Digital Video Camera	\$940	1	\$940
3	Woodland HS	Illumimax 120/80 LCD Projector	\$1,420	1	\$1,420
4	Woodland HS	Micropixel P-5 5 Megapixel Document Camera	\$870	1	\$870
5	Woodland HS	Opus-infinity 4601 Mixer w lavalier microphone	\$870	1	\$1,870
6	Woodland HS	Og-24 Presentation Video cart for Learning Lab	\$21,780	1	\$21,780
7	Woodland HS	Tobsung classroom monitors & mount installation	1650	1	1650
8	Woodland HS	Omigosh 3TBSP Classroom computers	\$500	20	\$10,000
9	Woodland HS	Wire Dist Learning Lab & video-conf. equip into system	\$11,340	1	\$11,340
		Woodland HS Total			\$59,545
10	Valley HS	Poliburg Intl 1776 Video Codec	\$9,675	1	\$9,675
11	Valley HS	DV 2020X Digital Video Camera	\$940	1	\$940

12	Valley HS	Illumimax 120/80 LCD Projector	\$1,420	1	\$1,420
13	Valley HS	Micropixel Megapixel Document Camera	\$870	1	\$870
14	Valley HS	Opus-infinity 4601 Mixer w lavalier microphone	\$870	1	\$1,870
15	Valley HS	Tobsung classroom monitors & mount installation	1650	1	\$1650
16	Valley HS	Omigosh 3TBSP Classroom computers	\$500	20	\$10,000
17	Valley HS	Og-24 Presentation Video cart	\$21,780	1	\$21,780
18	Valley HS	Wire Dist Learning Lab & video-conf. equip into system	\$11,340	1	\$11,340
		Valley HS Total			\$59,545
Overall Project Budget – Page 1 Subtotal →					(not used in this example)
Budget Summary					
A.	(Sum of page 1 and continuation sheet subtotals) Overall DLT Project Budget⁴				\$291,830
B.	(as documented under Tab E-3) Less Proposed Cash Match ⁵				\$43,775
C.	(from <i>In-Kind Match Worksheet</i>) Less Proposed In-Kind Match⁵				0
D.	DLT Grant Request (A – B – C = D)				\$160,214

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Main Budget Worksheet (Continuation)

Line Item No.	Site Name	Description	Unit Cost	No.	Extended Cost
19	Southland HS	Poliburg Intl 1776 Video Codec	\$9,675	1	\$9,675
20	Southland HS	DV 2020X Digital Video Camera	\$940	1	\$940
21	Southland HS	Illumimax 120/80 LCD Projector	\$1,420	1	\$1,420
22	Southland HS	Micropixel P-5 5 Megapixel Document Camera	\$870	1	\$870
23	Southland HS	Opus-infinity No. 4601 Mixer w lavalier and handheld microphones	\$1,870	1	\$1,870
24	Southland HS	Tobsung classroom monitors & mount installation	1650	1	1650
25	Southland HS	Og-24 Presentation Video cart for Learning Lab	\$21,780	1	\$21,780
26	Southland HS	Omigosh 3TBSP Classroom computers	\$500	20	\$10,000
27	Southland HS	Wire Dist Learning Lab & video-conf. equip into system	\$11,340	1	\$11,340
		Southland HS Subtotal			\$59,545
28	County Seat hub	Moderncom 3000 Video Server	\$85,500	1	\$85,500
29	County Seat hub	Tobsung T-98 Content Server	\$12,920	1	\$12,920
30	County Seat hub	Poliburg Intl 1776 Video Codec	\$9,675	1	\$9,675

31	County Seat hub	DV 2020X Digital Video Camera	\$940	1	\$940
32	County Seat hub	Illumimax 120/80 LCD Projector	\$1,420	1	\$1,420
33	County Seat hub	Micropixel P-5 5 Megapixel Document Camera	\$870	1	\$870
34	County Seat hub	Opus-infinity No. 4601 Mixer w lavalier and handheld microphones	\$1,870	1	\$1,870
		Countryseat Total			\$113,195
Overall DLT Project Budget – Page <u>2</u> Subtotal →					not used here

DLT Project Other Funds Worksheet

(See D-1 & D-2 in Section IV of the *Application Guide*)

Some line-items included in a DLT Project Budget are not eligible as either grant or match. The funds for these must come from other sources and are designated here as “Other Funds.” Show items in your project that will be purchased with funds other than DLT Budget funds. Do not include any items or totals from this sheet on the *Overall Budget Worksheet*.

Line Item No.	Site Name	Description	Other Fund Cost (per/yr)	Source
1	Woodland HS	Salaries / part time project coordinator	\$12,000	Center CC
2	Woodland HS	Additional IT expenses/ misc	\$6,000	Center CC
3	Valley HS	Salaries / part time project coordinator	\$12,000	Center CC
4	Valley HS	Connection fee	36,000	Center CC
5	Southland HS	Salaries / part time project coordinator	\$12,000	Southland HS
6	Southland HS	Connection fee	\$24,000	Southland HS
7	Countryseat CC	Project manager	\$25,000	Center CC
8	Countryseat CC	Connection fee	\$12,000	Center CC

D. Total Proposed Other Funds →	\$139,000
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In-Kind Match Worksheet:

Before proposing an in-kind match, we strongly recommend you review the discussion about in-kind matching in Section IV, E-3. If your application proposes any in-kind match items, show them on the *In-Kind Match Worksheet*. This includes any specific items identified in the match documentation letter(s). Listing specific items on the *In-Kind Match Worksheet* officially deems them as a proposed in-kind match, regardless of whether or not they are referred to in any of the fund commitment letter(s) specified as cash match. If you intend to propose a **cash match** that can be applied against any eligible purpose, **do not specify the items** to which you want the funds to apply. Remember to identify each in-kind match line-item in reference to the line-item number and description that is in the *Overall Budget Worksheet* (line-item number, site, description, etc.).

The purpose of matching funds in a competition is to encourage something that would not otherwise occur, not to give an unfair competitive advantage to entities that routinely make technology purchases over entities that do not. We scrutinize in-kind matches carefully to ensure they are credible and integral parts of the grant project.

As is discussed in Section IV, E-3, there is no benefit to the applicant in proposing an in-kind match unless it is something that the applicant is already planning on purchasing for another purpose, in which case it is difficult to make the case that the purchase is an integral part of the grant project. In many cases, we do not credit these proposed in-kind matches because the applicant does not demonstrate that they are a credible and integral part of the grant project.

There is no example for the In Kind Worksheet.

DLT grants require a 15% minimum match

To calculate the match percentage:

$$\text{Matching contributions} \div \text{Proposed Grant Amount} \times 100 = \text{Match \%}$$

$$(\$43,775 \div \$291,830) \times 100 = 15\%$$

Calculation of 10% Rule for Category 3 Costs (See D, *Project Information*, in Section IV of this *Application Guide*)

There are three categories of eligible costs. The third category includes training and the development of instructional programming. Category three costs are limited to 10% of the grant request and/or match calculated separately. The budget above does not include any of these costs. If it did, the costs could be limited as follows:

10% of the Grant Request = \$24,806

10% of the match = \$4,378

D-3. Financial Information and Sustainability

The DLT Program awards applications that demonstrate that their project will be sustainable. The application needs to show that funding is available for the three-year period that it takes to put together the project (required for eligibility), and to ensure the project's continuance afterwards as a viable community resource. Research projects and short-term demonstration projects (of less than three years) will not be considered.

Provide a narrative description that addresses your project's feasibility. The narrative should include a description of the project's leadership, its technical expertise, and how leadership and technical expertise is distributed throughout all of the sites or the service territory. Describe how the flow of funds and institutional financial support (local government, businesses, school system, university or foundation) will sustain the project and maintain a continuity of service.

Applications submitted without a *Financial Information and Sustainability* Section cannot be evaluated and will be returned as ineligible for funding consideration. Place this section under Tab D-3 of your application. Your narrative should include all assumptions and the following information:

A description of the project's revenues and expenses in the project budget (refer to the Other Funds Worksheet);

Evidence of cost sharing arrangements among hub and end-user sites, if applicable;

Identification of any other items that may affect feasibility or sustainability of the project.

D-4. Statement of Experience

Provide a written narrative describing your organization's demonstrated capability and experience in operating an educational or health care endeavor and any project similar to the proposed project. Experience in a similar project is desirable but not required. If your organization does not have experience with projects similar to the proposed project, you should explain how you plan to overcome this. Place this narrative under Tab D-4 or your Application.

E. Objective Scoring Supporting Documentation

E-1. Rurality

General Information

The DLT grant program prioritizes the funding of applications based on several factors, one of which is *rurality*. The DLT Program uses the *Rurality Worksheet* and its supporting documentation (maps) for applicants to break out their projects into its individual locations, so that the sites can be examined individually and as a whole in terms of their location and the size of their population. The *Rurality* score, according to our current regulation, is based on the population size of each community where an end user site is located. For non-fixed type applications we look at the entire project service territory and score the population of each town.

Some towns have a small population, but are located closer to metropolitan areas than other towns of very similar population. The Community Needs and Benefits scoring category takes isolation and distance into consideration, so the maps you submit are an important part of the overall consideration of the project.

In the *Rurality Worksheet* please tally your *rurality* score and document your project's *rurality* with maps. The information can be obtained following our step-by-step directions using the Census FactFinder2 Website, or by using a 2013 Rand McNally Atlas.

Include the population statistics and *rurality* calculations for all sites, including those you have designated as (pure) hubs. To designate a site as a pure hub, you must demonstrate that no benefits flow to the site or to users at that site. Explanations and narratives regarding *rurality* should be included in your *Needs and Benefits* narrative section, F-2.

***Rurality* Threshold for Eligibility**

The objective category of *rurality* for fixed site applications is scored by averaging the rurality score of all the end user sites as described in this section. It is important to note that the objective *Rurality* score establishes a score threshold for program eligibility. Your project must score at least 20 points to qualify for the DLT Program competition.

The following classifications define the various population levels determining the Rurality score.

EXCEPTIONALLY RURAL AREA – 5,000 and under. Any area of the USA not included within the boundaries of any incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population in excess of 5,000 inhabitants.

RURAL AREA – 5,001-10,000. Any area of the USA included within the boundaries of any incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population over 5,000 and not in excess of 10,000 inhabitants.

MID-RURAL AREA – 10,001-20,000. Any area of the USA included within the boundaries of any incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population over 10,000 and not in excess of 20,000 inhabitants.

URBAN AREA - Over 20,000. Any area of the USA included within the boundaries of any incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population in excess of 20,000 inhabitants.

Population-to-Score Table

Site Location	Points
Exceptionally Rural Area	45
Rural Area	30
Mid-Rural Area	15
Urban Area	0

Measuring Rurality for Non-Fixed Sites

The *Rurality* score that is based on the population where the end user site is located is not applicable for non fixed-site applications. Using the organization's headquarters site or the facility an ambulance is parked when off duty is not always the most representative measure of the project's potential rural benefit. For these organizations that cover a wide territory with their service (much of which is rural), their facilities are likely to be located in the more urbanized part of their territory for practical reasons.

For non-fixed site applications, we must assume that grant-funded equipment will be used in those areas where the service is needed from day to day. Determining *Rurality* for non-fixed site projects is based on the idea that each potential end-user in the service territory is regarded as an end-user. Below, we will discuss two methods for determining a *Rurality* score based on the nature of the project, *i.e.*, fixed site or non-fixed site.

Instructions for the Fixed Site *Rurality Worksheet* & Supporting Maps

Finding the Population of a Town or Place Name Using the Census FactFinder2

The following instructions are based on the Department of the Census FactFinder2 website, as it functions in April, 2013. If any updates or improvements are needed to these instructions, RUS will publish those on its DLT Website: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/UTP_DLT.html

Go to the FactFinder2 main page, <http://factfinder2.census.gov> . Select Advanced Search from the top menu.

In the main part of the screen, you will see a peach- colored window with 2 blank text boxes.

In the field “topic or table name” type P1, and in the ‘state, county or place’ field type your town name followed by a comma, and the state abbreviation. Click <GO>

U.S. Department of Commerce
United States Census Bureau
AMERICAN FactFinder

MAIN COMMUNITY FACTS GUIDED SEARCH ADVANCED SEARCH DOWNLOAD OPTIONS

Search - Use the options on the left (topics, geographies, ...) to narrow your search results

Your Selections
Your Selections is empty

To search for tables and other files in American FactFinder:

1 Enter search terms and an optional geography and click GO

Search using the options below:

Topics (age, income, year, dataset, ...)

Geographies (states, counties, places, ...)

Race and Ethnic Groups (race, ancestry, tribe)

topic or table name state, county or place (optional)

P1 Tishomingo GO

topics race/ancestry

or

Select from Topics, Race and Ethnic Groups

- these are added to "Your Selections"
- the Search Results are updated

Tishomingo County, Mississippi
Tishomingo town, Mississippi
Tishomingo city, Oklahoma
Tishomingo CCD, Johnston County, Oklahoma
District 1, Tishomingo County, Mississippi
District 2, Tishomingo County, Mississippi
Balance of Tishomingo County, Mississippi

We have entered our example, Tishomingo, Oklahoma. FactFinder2 will respond with a pop-up window listing places that correspond to your typed place/name, (often adding the word “city” or “town” after the name you typed-in).

From those options, choose the one that is *most* correct.

Search - Use the options on the left (topics, geographies, ...) to narrow your search results

Your Selections
Your Selections is empty

To search for tables and other files in American FactFinder:

Were you looking for...

We couldn't find any results for Tishomingo as a geography. Were you looking for one of the following?

Geographies:

Geography Name	Geography Type
Tishomingo County, Mississippi	County
Tishomingo town, Mississippi	Place within State
Tishomingo city, Oklahoma	Place within State
District 1, Tishomingo County, Mississippi	County Subdivision
District 2, Tishomingo County, Mississippi	County Subdivision

show more Geographies

In our example, Census has added the word “city” to our request for the town Tishomingo. This may not be the way the town is usually referred to, but it is how Census categorizes the town. So, we select “Tishomingo city, Oklahoma” from this pop-up window

In the “Geographies” table, next to the town we have selected, you will see that Tishomingo comes under a Geographic Type Census calls *place within a state*. Click on the name of the town.

Search - Use the options on the left (topics, geographies, ...) to narrow your search results

Your Selections

Search using...

Search: "P1"

Place within State: Tishomingo city, Oklahoma

clear all selections and start a new search

Search using the options below:

Topics (age, income, year, dataset, ...)

Geographies (states, counties, places, ...)

Race and Ethnic Groups (race, ancestry, tribe)

Industry Codes (NAICS industry, ...)

EEO Occupation Codes

Search Results: 1-8 of 8 tables and other products match 'Your Selections'

Refine your search results: topic or table name state, county or place (optional)

Selected: View Download Compare Clear All

ID	Table, File or Document Title	Dataset	About
QT-P1	Age Groups and Sex: 2010	2010 American Indian and Alaska Native SF	
QT-P1	Age Groups and Sex: 2010	2010 SF1 100% Data	
QT-P1	Age Groups and Sex: 2010	2010 SF2 100% Data	
P1	RACE	2010 Redistricting Data SF (PL 94-171)	
P1	TOTAL POPULATION	2010 SF1 100% Data	
QT-P1	Age Groups and Sex: 2000	2000 SF1 100% Data	
QT-P1	Age Groups and Sex: 2000	2000 SF2 100% Data	
QT-P1	Age Groups and Sex: 2000	2000 SF4 Sample Data	

Selected: View Download Compare Clear All

Select TOTAL POPULATION for the total population of the *place* that you have selected.

P1 TOTAL POPULATION : Total population

2010 Census Summary File 1

Table View

Actions: Bookmark Print Download Create a Map

Not all columns may be displayed below. Click Back to Search to select other geographies using the search options on the left.

The table contains a total of 14,052,071 data columns.

NOTE: For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <http://www.census.gov>

Tishomingo city, Oklahoma	
Total	3,034

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

We see that the population for Tishomingo in the 2010 Census is 3,034.

Comparing this population of 3034 against the *Rurality* Population-to-Score table, we determine that the Tishomingo site is rated *exceptionally rural*, with a score of 45.

More than One Way to Find Population Numbers for Towns

One can use Census population data either from the Census FactFinder2 Website (instructions here) or from a 2013 Rand McNally Atlas (Atlas). This Atlas cites the 2010 Census as its source for population statistics. Population figures used in the 2013 DLT Grant competition must use the 2010 Census as the source, whether it is from the Atlas, or from the FactFinder2 Website.

The task is to enter the population of each town where a site is located. If you are using the Atlas, please make note of that on your Rurality Worksheet.

Use the *Population-to-Score* table above to determine *Rurality* points for each site.

Use the *Rurality Worksheet* to enter: 1) the name you have given to the site; 2) the town, city, or *place within a state* where the site is located; 3) the population (2010 Census) of the town; and 4) the *Rurality* score (as derived from the Population-to-Score table).

On the Fixed Site *Rurality Worksheet* you will begin your list starting with each hub, numbering them (separately from the sites where there are end users). After you have listed the hubs, leave a blank row, and start listing the hub/end user and end user sites (those receiving the benefit of the system and service). Start the list with the combination hub/end-user sites (if any) first and then the pure end user sites. Start numbering this list at 1 and so on, i.e. 1,2,3,4,5.

Although pure hubs are not included in the calculation, the Agency will need this data to recalculate the score if there appears to be end user beneficiaries at the site. Place the sites in the same order and use the same numbering as on the Site Worksheet (and which will be used on the NSLP Worksheet). If any end user sites are not within the boundaries of a town or a *place* that cannot be identified by 2010 Census or found in the listing of cities, towns, and places in the 2013 Rand McNally then mark that site as “Census Rural” and assign 45 points to it.

Maps for the *Rurality Worksheet* - the Supporting Documentation

To review grant applications, the DLT program needs maps of your project sites: 1) to identify sites geographically for better understanding of the project; 2) to ascertain the role of distance in determining a project area’s overall need for distance learning or telemedicine; and 3) to supplement the population data in considering the Community Needs and Benefits of a project.

Map Specifications Showing the End User Sites in Your Project

For each end user (or hub/end user) site, please provide 2 maps, each on a 8 by 11 standard sheet of paper to be put in your application notebook behind the *Rurality Worksheet*:

A medium range close-up where the site is either generated using the Census Website FactFinder2 using the instructions below or otherwise marked by hand on a map using a colored pen. The medium-range close up should show the end user site and its surrounding communities or empty rural areas.

A longer-range image, which is zoomed-out far enough to show the end user site in relation to the nearest Urban Area (UA) or metropolitan area. Please be sure that the marking of end user site shows up distinctly on the image.

Note: If the end user site is in close proximity to an Urban Area or metropolitan area where the medium range close-up also shows the urbanized area, the applicant only needs to provide one image-shot of the end user site – clearly displaying the end user site in relation to the urbanized area.

Hub Maps

For each (pure) hub site please provide one map image, which shows the hub site in a medium range view, showing one or more of the project end user sites (if possible).

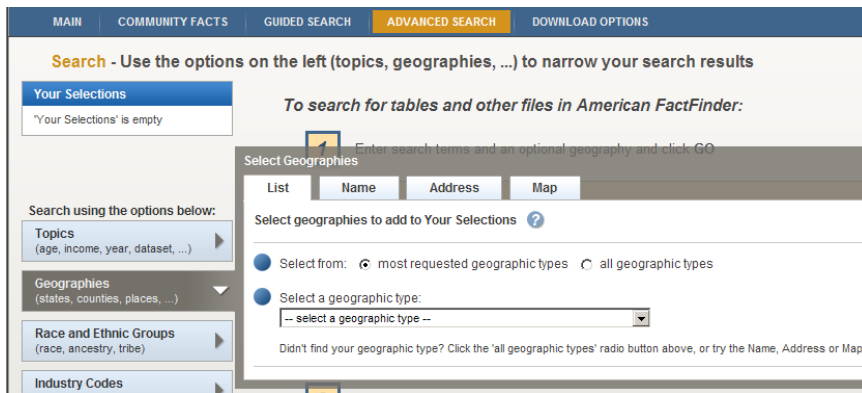
Alternative to Using the FactFinder2 Website

We have provided instructions herein so that applicants can use the Census FactFinder2 Website in a few easy steps to produce the maps of their end user sites and hubs. Applicants may also refer to the 2013 Rand McNally Atlas (Atlas) and use a copy machine to make (**color**) images of their end user sites to the map specifications (1) and (2) outlined in the previous section.

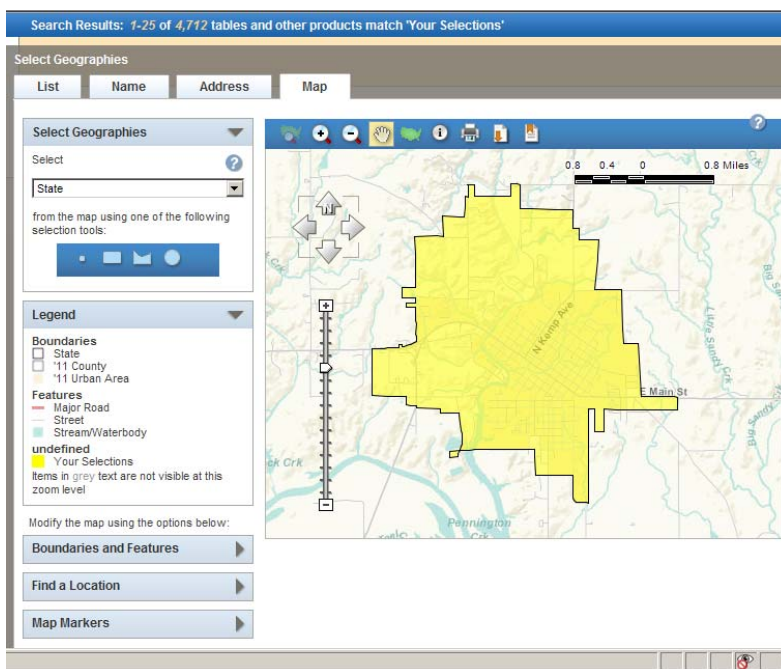
Locating your Site on a Map Site using FactFinder2 Map

Go to the FactFinder2 main page, <http://factfinder2.census.gov>. Select Advanced Search from the top menu. From the left hand menu column click the panel-button “Select Geographies.”

A “Select Geographies” window will pop up.



“Select a geographic type” is a drop-down box. Click on the downward-pointing caret symbol to select “place” from the list. Another pop-up window will appear with a state drop-down list. Choose the state where your site is located. *Those selections will load in the Your Selections box in the upper left of the page.*



Click on the Map tab inside the “Select Geographies” window.

That should generate a map of the town you entered, and the area around it.

The image to the left is our selection of Tishomingo.

For DLT purposes, we will want you to bring more detail into the map. Click in the light blue panel button on the lower left labeled “Boundaries and Features”.

Using Boundaries and Labels

A pop-up box will appear with a long list of Census viewing options and two extra columns that display boundaries and labels. Check just the label boxes (not the boundaries) for “**2012 Place**” and “**Metro Division**”.

Scroll down to the bottom of that window and click on Update. The map will incorporate the features you turned on.

Zooming Out

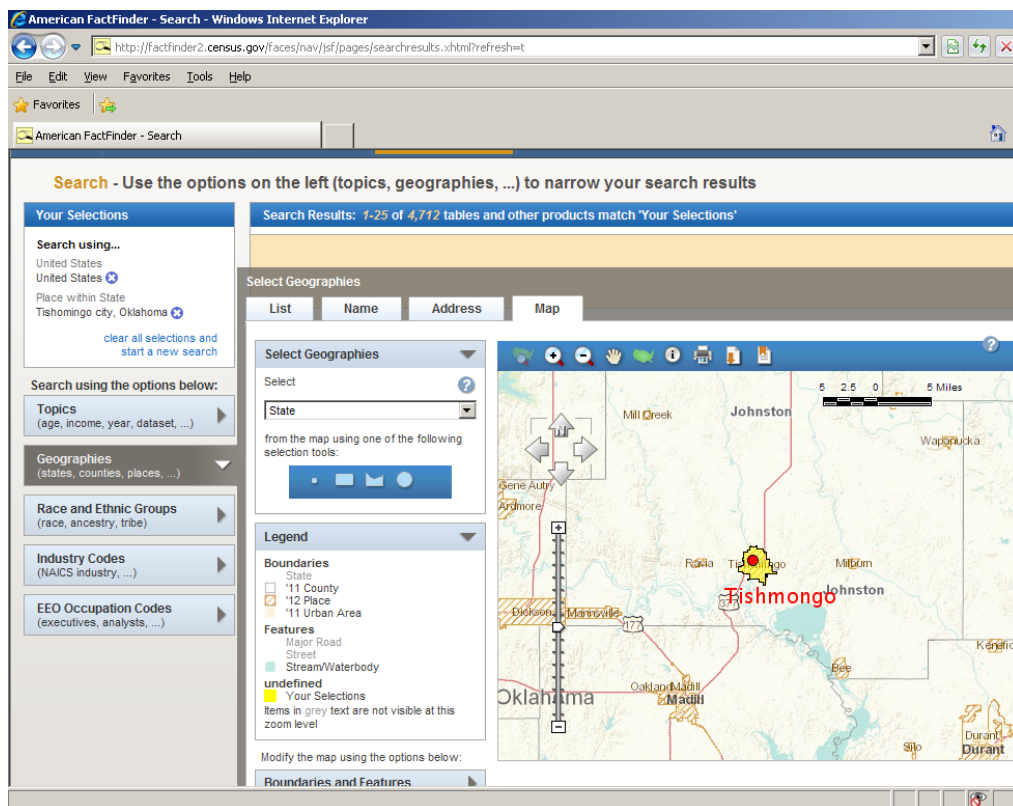
Using the zoom-out feature (the sliding bar with “+” positive at the top and “-” negative at the bottom), zoom out in single increments – giving the map web site time to process and render the new image on the page – 2 or 3 times until other towns appear on the map.

Placing a Label on your Site

Looking down to the bottom of the menu selection on the left at the bottom of that window you will see the Map Marker tool. Open that tool by clicking on the caret symbol. Inside the tool area you will see a dot – for marking a location, the letter “A” - for typing-in text, a reversing arrow – as an undo tool, and the letter X, for clearing the map of marks and staring over.

Select the dot, and the size for the dot (in the low range – 10), and the color (preferably red).

Place your mouse cursor over the town/site and click into the map. Select the “A” and type in the name of the Site (the name that you have used consistently throughout the application). Choose the size of the text (preferably large - 16 or 18), so that it is still visible when you zoom out even further. Please the mouse cursor next to, below or above the town. Now click into the map.



Please note that the Marker feature is always consistent. If the marking does not work for a particular site print out, please mark clearly by hand the name of the site after you have printed them out.

At this stage save the map as a PDF file using the FactFinder2 save feature.

Creating (or copying) Map Images of the End User Sites in Your Project

As stated previously, provide 2 images for each end user site:

- A close-to-medium range image where the site is marked on a map, either by hand using a colored pen, or is generated using the Census Website FactFinder2 using the instructions below. The close-to-medium image should show the end user site and its surrounding communities, or empty rural areas.

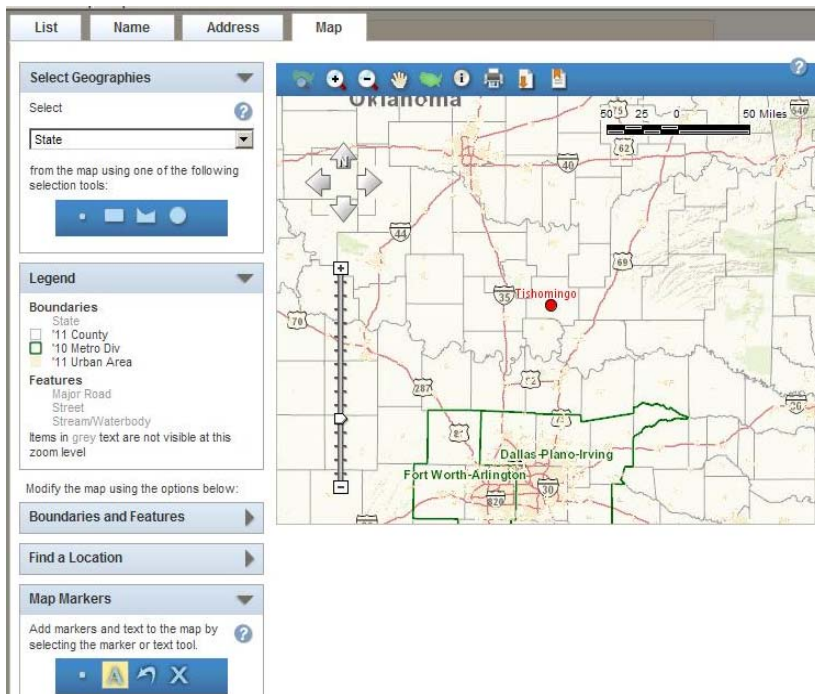
- A longer-range image which appears to be zoomed-out far enough to show the end user site in relation to the nearest Urban Area (UA) or metropolitan area. Please be sure that the end user site shows up distinctly on the image.

Saving the First Site Image (medium range close-up)

At the top of the map window you will see icons for various features of the map, including a printer icon. Click the printer icon. Choosing the default settings, put a title to the map, such as name of site and (suggestion) “close-up”.

When you click “ok” it will create a PDF file of your image and prompt you to name it and save it to your computer. (Be sure to append your file with .pdf). This is one of the maps you will print out for the *Rurality* section of your submission, or send electronically with your Grants.gov submission.

Zooming out to next level



With the map in its current settings (all the settings we have described in this mapping section to this point) go back to the zoom-out button and incrementally zoom out, step by step until there is a named large metropolitan area (as seen in this image of Tishomingo).

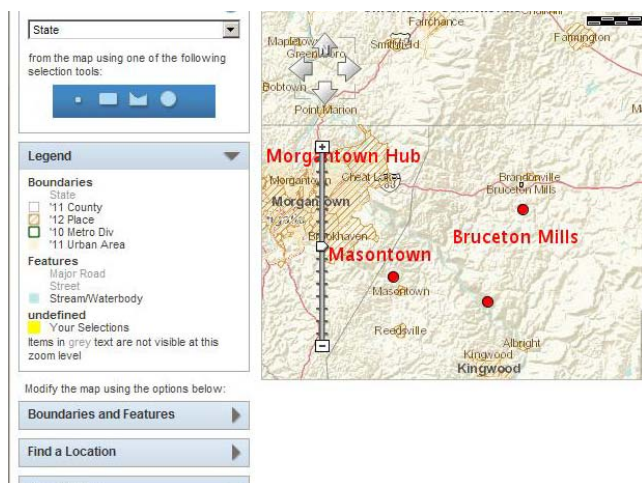
The further away the town is from a metropolitan area the more you will have to zoom out.

Repeat the map save routine using the printer icon at the top of the map, and save as a PDF file to be submitted in your application.

If the close-up map image of your site already contains a metropolitan area, and the town jurisdictions are showing up also on the map, then one map is sufficient.

Doubling-up on Maps

If you have 2 (or more) end user sites that are in close proximity to each other and could consolidate them into one image, that image would be an acceptable alternative to having them as separate maps. It is also acceptable to include a hub site if it is visible within the same map image.



FactFinder2 mapping allows you to place more than one point and marker label on a single map. Just repeat the instructions for placing a point and marker, and save the map as instructed in the previous paragraphs.

The image to the left is an example of doubling-up on maps.

The example is in rural Preston County, Northern West Virginia, and includes the closest urbanized area, Morgantown, as a hub site.

Include the print-outs or copies of maps as documentation behind the Rurality Worksheet

Adding up Individual Scores for an Overall *Rurality* Score

After you have entered all your sites and the corresponding population on the *Rurality Worksheet* calculate your estimated score by taking the average of the scores you designated as hub/end-users and end-users. Do not include pure Hubs in the calculation.

Rounding and Eligibility

Scores can be rounded in the normal manner to an integer (i.e., 30.5 rounds to 31, 30.49999 rounds to 30.0, but only if the average score is greater than the minimum eligibility threshold of at 20 points. In other words, if the average *Rurality* score is 19.65, do not round the score to 20 points.

Instructions Specific to a *Non-Fixed Site* Application

Remember that non-fixed site projects must have an official, geographically defined service territory that is defined on the map you provided with the *Site Worksheet* under Tab A of your application, as described in the *Site Worksheet* section. For example, a visiting nurse association may be chartered to serve the residents of a specific area. That area may be defined by a political or jurisdictional boundary such as a county. Or it may be defined by a list of zip codes in which they provide service. As stated in the *Site Worksheet* section, if your proposed non-fixed site project has a field office or an operational and staffed fixed location in a non urban portion of your service territory, then you can anchor your project to that site and consider it a fixed-site project. This site would serve as a “host” of your organization to distribute telemedicine monitoring equipment or make use of the ambulance equipment. This is called a *Non-fixed Site Conversion*.

If you decide to choose this option, your designated site must be: 1) inside the boundaries of your service territory; and 2) not located within the boundaries of a town with a population over 10,000. This is because, under our *Rurality*-scoring system, a project must have at least 20 *Rurality* points to be eligible. A Mid-Rural rating (having more than 10,000 but not in excess of 20,000) yields only 15 points. The next rating, a rating of Rural (having more than 5,000 but not in excess of 10,000) yields 30 points. There is no interpolated middle-ground in the rating system.

If your designated end user site meets those criteria, please -at your earliest convenience - verify with the DLT staff to make sure that your designated site is eligible for the non-fixed site conversion before proceeding any further with the *Rurality* Section. The phone number is (202) 720-0699 and the email is dltinfo@wdc.usda.gov . If you receive confirmation, please use the *Rurality Worksheet for Fixed Sites*, listing the designated site as the project's singular site, making note on the *Worksheet* that it is a Non-Fixed Site Conversion.

Instructions Specific to Non Fixed Site Application

For all other non-fixed site projects, use the Non-fixed Site *Rurality* Worksheet to list the various towns in your service territory to derive a *Rurality* score.

This section will take the applicant step-by-step through the process of tabulating the (Census-recognized) places in the project's service territory and their population. The instructions are geared to those projects where their service territories are contained in one entire county. For projects comprised of more than one county, the same process would be applied on a per county basis.

For those projects where the service territory covers only partial counties, the method of determining *rurality* is more complex involving more detailed map work. The task is the same – to identify every town and (Census-recognized) place in a county, or in *that part* of the county that is inside the boundary of your service territory. If your non-fixed site project does includes areas that are only partial counties, and the applicant needs further guidance in preparing their *Rurality* Worksheet, please feel free to contact the Agency for further instructions. Call 202 720-0665 or send an email to dlt-info@usda.gov.

To complete the *Rurality Worksheet* for non-fixed sites, you will need to refer to the Census FactFinder2 website or to the 2013 Rand McNally Atlas.

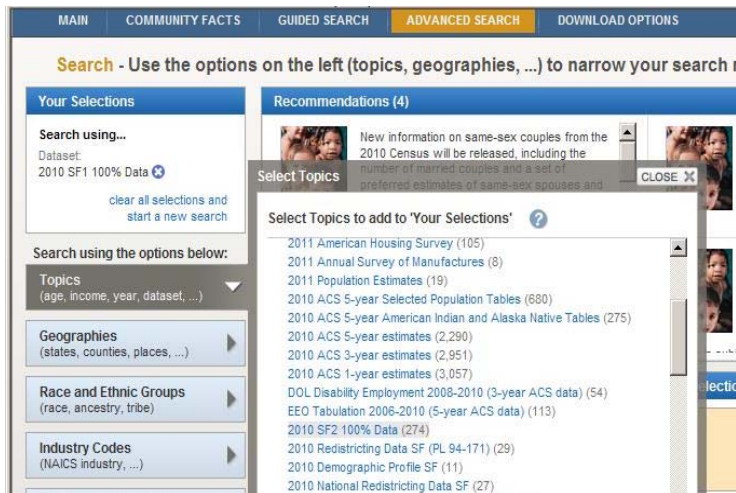
On the Worksheet list the name of each city, town or (Census-recognized) place that lies within the project service territory. For each of those line item towns, in its proper column list the county where it is located and the population of that town or place (using 2010 Census).

Referring to the *Rurality* Population-to-Score table on the worksheet, assign the number of *Rurality* points associated with each town's population statistic. ***Only list those towns that show up on the Census FactFinder2 maps (or those which are listed on the 2013 Rand McNally Atlas).***

At the very end of the list use the last row to enter the term **Census Rural**. Census Rural represents all other communities and rural residents inside your service **area** that are not included in any town or place recognized by the Census. That item will be assigned 45 points and will be counted in your *rurality* average as a single entry.

For our sample, we will use Jefferson County, West Virginia as the service territory to step through the instructions.

Go to FactFinder2 main page <http://factfinder2.census.gov>. Select Advanced Search from the top menu buttons.



From the blue-tinted panel-buttons on the left hand side, click on ‘Topics’, and a small pop-up box will appear.

From the drop-down list (Select Topics) open up the plus’ symbol for Dataset.

A long list of selections will appear. Look through the list and select 2010 SF1 100%

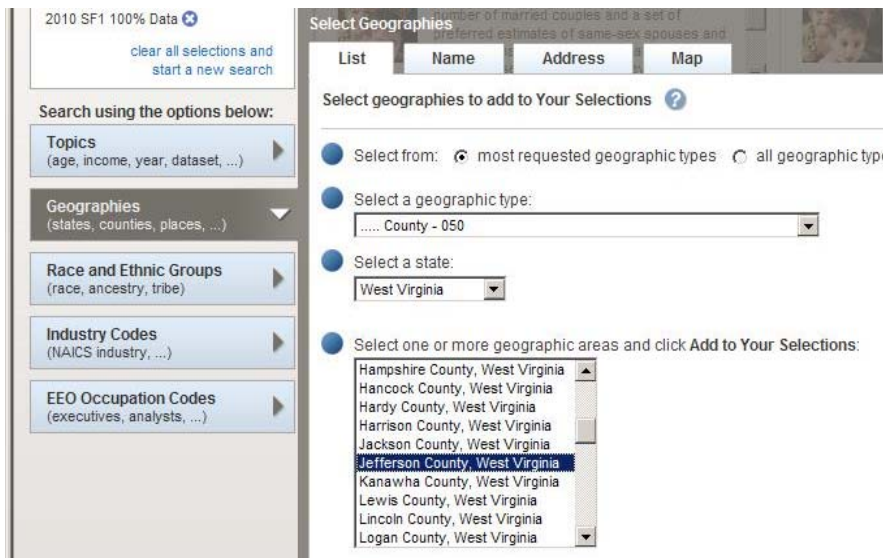
That dataset title will be placed into the upper left box under ‘Your Selections’.

1754 Close the Topics pop-up box.

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1756 From the same blue-tinted panel-buttons on the left, click on ‘Geographies’. Another pop-up window will appear. From the ‘Select a geographic type’ drop-down list, find and select ‘County 050’.

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Below that text box choose the state. From the “Select one or more geographic areas” drop-down list, choose your target county.

We will be choosing Jefferson County WV.

Those items are then loaded in Your Selections box on the top left.

Close the Select Geographies window.

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1760 In the peach-colored text box enter the text “Population, Housing Units, Area, and Density: 2010 - County -- County Subdivision and Place” in the “topic or table name” space, click <Go>.

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1763 FactFinder2 will call up several tables. Choose “PH1 Population, Housing Units, Area, and Density: 2010” by clicking on its hyperlink text.

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GCT-PH1

Population, Housing Units, Area, and Density: 2010 - County -- County Subdivision and Place
2010 Census Summary File 1

Table View

BACK

Actions: [Modify Table](#) [Bookmark](#) [Print](#) [Download](#) [Create a Map](#)

This table can be difficult to find. If you call up the table by typing in its exact text and do not get this table, you can find it by clicking through the pages until you find it.

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American FactFinder - Results

NOTE: For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010>

Geography: Jefferson County, West Virginia

Geographic area	Population	Housing units	Area in square miles			Density per square mile
			Total area	Water area	Land area	
Jefferson County	53,498	22,037	211.67	2.04	209.63	
COUNTY SUBDIVISION AND PLACE						
Charles Town district	11,211	4,937	7.46	0.02	7.44	1,500
Charles Town city (part)	4,062	1,863	2.55	0.00	2.55	1,590
Ranson corporation (part)	3,444	1,537	1.23	0.00	1.23	2,800
Remainder of Charles Town district	3,705	1,537	3.68	0.02	3.66	1,010
Harpers Ferry district	10,518	4,350	33.45	0.99	32.45	324
Bolivar town	1,045	565	0.44	0.00	0.44	2,375
Charles Town city (part)	26	6	0.97	0.00	0.97	27
Harpers Ferry town	286	175	0.61	0.08	0.53	541
Ranson corporation (part)	858	354	1.14	0.00	1.14	752
Shenandoah Junction CDP (part)	694	268	0.99	0.00	0.99	700
Remainder of Harpers Ferry district	7,609	2,982	29.31	0.91	28.39	268
Kabetown district	12,271	5,015	62.09	0.96	61.12	201
Charles Town city (part)	1,171	401	2.28	0.00	2.28	514
Shannondale CDP	3,358	1,551	8.74	0.32	8.43	398
Remainder of Kabetown district	7,742	3,063	51.06	0.64	50.42	152
Middleway district	9,353	3,675	61.98	0.02	61.96	151
Charles Town city (part)	0	0	0.01	0.00	0.01	0
Middleway CDP	441	201	1.12	0.00	1.12	393
Ranson corporation (part)	138	45	5.68	0.00	5.68	24
Shenandoah Junction CDP (part)	9	4	0.02	0.00	0.02	450
Remainder of Middleway district	8,765	3,425	55.15	0.02	55.13	158
Shepherdstown district	10,145	4,060	46.70	0.04	46.65	217
Shenandoah Junction CDP (part)	0	0	0.01	0.00	0.01	0
Shepherdstown town	1,734	583	0.37	0.00	0.37	4,660
Remainder of Shepherdstown district	8,411	3,477	46.32	0.04	46.27	183
PLACE						
Bolivar town	1,045	565	0.44	0.00	0.44	2,375
Charles Town city	5,259	2,270	5.81	0.00	5.81	905
Harpers Ferry town	286	175	0.61	0.08	0.53	541
Middleway CDP	441	201	1.12	0.00	1.12	393
Ranson corporation	4,440	1,936	8.05	0.00	8.05	551
Shannondale CDP	3,358	1,551	8.74	0.32	8.43	398
Shenandoah Junction CDP	703	272	1.01	0.00	1.01	696
Shepherdstown town	1,734	583	0.37	0.00	0.37	4,660

X Not applicable.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

The resulting table gives you more information than you need, but it does provide the information you need. In the image on the left, look at the list near the bottom under “Place”. That is the list of towns and the next column is their population. .

Copy down the names of the places, as listed in your version of this table – and their population numbers.

Be sure to enter in the name of the county next to the town/place.

Then you can refer to the *Population-to-Score* table and enter in the corresponding scores for each place/town.

If your service territory includes any more counties, repeat the same procedure and enter each place/town name with corresponding county name and *Rurality* score.

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Last but not least, after you have listed each county and partial county use the last row of your *Rurality Worksheet for Non-fixed Sites* to enter the term ‘**Census Rural**’. Census Rural will represent the rural area of your entire service area, which will account for all residents that are not included in any town or place recognized by the Census. That item will be assigned 45 points and will be counted in your *rurality* average as a single entry.

2013 Non-Fixed Site *Rurality* Worksheet (Sample)

List the name of each city, town or ‘**place**’ that lies within the project service territory (refer to instructions in the 2013 DLT Grant Application Guide). For each of those line items, list the county where it is located and the population of that town or place (using 2010 Census). Referring to the table above, assign the number of *Rurality* points associated with each town’s population statistic.

#	City, Town or Place	County	Population	Rurality Points
1	Bolivar	Jefferson	1045	45
2	Charles Town	“ “	5,259	30
3	Middleway	“ “	441	45
4	Ranson	“ “	4,440	45
5	Shannondale	“ “	3,358	45

Applicant’s Estimated *Rurality* Score
(Sum of *Rurality* Points ÷ Number of Items)

43

Rurality Score
(For Agency Use)

(Continuation)

6	Shenandoah Junction	Jefferson	703	45
7	Shepherdstown	“ “	1734	45
8	Census Rural	“ “		45

Autonomous Service Territories – We assume that a non-fixed site project will operate over the entire area served by the applicant/organization. In other words, that DLT-funded equipment in a non-fixed site telemedicine project will be used throughout the entire service territory based on medical need. As such, the entire population of the service territory must be used in determining the *Rurality* score because the entire population benefits from the grant and/or match. However, we are aware that in some cases a service provider will have multiple, discrete service territories that are essentially stand-alone operations. For example, a visiting nurse association may serve three counties, but operate as three discrete and autonomous units, each providing their service out of a separate physical facility in one of the three counties and providing service only in that county. Such an organizational arrangement can be referred to as a regional division.

In cases such, where an applicant serves more than one service territory, and those territories are well defined, already in existence, and operating autonomously out of a separate physical facility as a regional division, we can have reasonable confidence that if a grant is awarded to such a regional division, its benefit will flow only to the residents within that regional division. As a consequence, we will entertain an application specific to one (or more) regional division(s) of the operation and consider scoring the application on the specific regional division(s).

The applicant will have to demonstrate in the application that the equipment and personnel will work out of an existing physical location separate from other territories served by the organization and that the division provides service only within that defined territory. Future service territory divisions,

pledges to reorganize by territory, organizational service territories on paper, and other types of arrangements that are not distinct and physically autonomous regional divisions will not be considered. To be considered as stand-alone, the regional division must be existing and genuine. Otherwise, the applicant must base its scores on the population of the entire service area.

E-2. National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

This criterion uses National School Lunch Program (NSLP) eligibility statistics as a way to measure the financial need of the beneficiaries of the DLT project. We ask you to present an estimated *NSLP* score in your application. An *NSLP Worksheet* is provided in the *Toolkit* for this purpose. The Agency will review your estimate and correct it if necessary. For purposes of the DLT Program, the NSLP percentage reflects the percentage of students **eligible** for reduced-price or free lunches for each area served by a hub/end-user or end-user site, **not the percentage of actual participation.**

Background of the NSLP

The NSLP is a federally assisted meal program providing nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to millions of children in thousands of schools and childcare institutions. School districts and independent schools in the program receive cash support and donated commodities from USDA for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve lunches that meet Federal requirements and they must offer reduced-price or free lunches to eligible children. The Food and Nutrition Service of USDA administers the program at the Federal level. At the State level, state education agencies and local school districts usually administer the NSLP.

The *NSLP* Score by Type of Project – Fixed and Non-fixed Sites

Most DLT projects operate at fixed sites such as schools or medical facilities. For these traditional DLT projects, the *NSLP* score is based on NSLP data for the sites where the end-users are located. As discussed with greater elaboration above with respect to the *Rurality* score, other projects serve end-users that are not fixed but vary over time such as home health care. For these types of projects, the *NSLP* score is based on NSLP data for the entire service territory.

Tips:

If you have no supporting data behind your *NSLP Worksheet*, you have not documented your NSLP percentages, and you will receive a zero in this category.

If you are in a small district, where K-12 is in one school, or on one campus where the lunch facility is shared so that separate NSLP data is not available for the individual high, middle, or elementary school, make this clear in the supporting documentation you supply behind the *NSLP Worksheet*.

If you provide printouts of NSLP data for many schools other than the sites in the application, **please highlight the data relevant to your application.**

Determining the *NSLP* Score for Projects in which all End-user Sites are Fixed

The *NSLP* score is based on the average of the relevant NSLP eligibility percentage for all hub/end-user and end/user sites. Use the following guidelines in preparing the *NSLP Worksheet*.

Does the applicant use **specific school or district-wide** statistics?

1. If the hub/end-user or end-user site is a **public school or non-profit private school of Kindergarten through Grade 12 (K-12)**, use the eligibility percentage for that **specific school**. If it is a high school, provide the high school data for that specific school. If it is an elementary school, provide data for the elementary school. Do not provide district-wide data or data from another school.

2. If the hub/end-user or end-user site is **any other entity** (college, private for-profit school, library, hospital, clinic, etc.) use the NSLP eligibility score for the **public school district** in which the site is located.

How does the applicant enter data on the *NSLP Worksheet*?

1. Enter each hub, hub/end-user, and end-user site onto the *NSLP Worksheet* placing them in the same order as on the *Site Worksheet* and *Rurality Worksheet*. Identify the site by type. Provide data for hubs. Although pure hubs are not part of the calculation, the Agency will need this data in case it determines that the site is actually a hub/end-user. Place pure hubs at the beginning of the list separated by a space and do not include them in your NSLP calculations as described below.

2. Your sites (fixed-site projects) or service territory (non-fixed-site projects) must be consistent throughout the application. **If the end-user sites or service territory are not consistent, your application cannot be evaluated and will be returned as ineligible for funding consideration.**

3. Applicants **must document** each site's NSLP percentage with a certification from the organization that administers the NSLP in your area that the data is accurate and the most recent available. **Any site without verifiable documentation attached behind the *NSLP Worksheet* will be evaluated at zero percent eligibility.** Some official NSLP data is posted on state and/or local governmental websites. If so, you may provide printouts from these official sites. Make certain that the official website from which those printouts are obtained is provided either on the printout or is added to it so that we can verify the information. A web address is to be provided with the printout, but if you provide only a web address, with no data, you have not documented your data and those sites will be evaluated at zero percent eligibility. Please ensure that the web link provide is operational.

4. Printouts without evidence of source and data from unofficial sites, such as commercial websites that report information about schools, are frequently out-of-date and/or unreliable, so they are not acceptable.

5. Place all NSLP certifications and any other documentation behind the *NSLP Worksheet* under Tab E-2 of your application.

Tips: To look up school district jurisdictions on map, refer to FactFinder2 instructions in the Site Worksheet Section of the Guide (the Kingwood, WV example).

NSLP Documentation Errors to Avoid:

- No documentation. Your application will receive an *NSLP* score of zero.
- A statement from the certifying NSLP official that the data is correct and the most recent available, but with no evidence in the letter of what the data is.
- An unsigned letter from the certifying official.
- A letter from the certifying official without a clearly printed name and title
- No reference to an official Website for the state NSLP data (in lieu of submitting at letter) with clearly marked Web address.

How is the score calculated?

1. The “Average NSLP” entered on the *NSLP Worksheet* is the average of the relevant NSLP eligibility percentages for all the hub/end-user and end-user sites or, in the case of a non-fixed site project, all the school districts that serve within the project service territory. When calculating the average, use the eligibility percentages exactly as received from the source of the NSLP data. In other words, if the administrator of the lunch program provides data to two decimal places, enter that data for each site on the *NSLP Worksheet* to two places.
2. **Do not round:** After calculating the average, enter it in the “Average NSLP” block on the *Worksheet*.
3. Use the scoring table below (it also appears on the *NSLP Worksheet*) to enter the score in the “Applicant’s Estimated NSLP Score” block.

Scoring Table	
<u>NSLP Percentage:</u>	<u>Points</u>
NSLP < 25%	0
25% ≤ NSLP < 50%	15
50% ≤ NSLP < 75%	25
75% ≤ NSLP	35

Example of NSLP Calculation for a Project with Fixed Sites

Central Community College will link itself, a community library, and two schools to the Deepwoods Nature Center for the purpose of receiving environmental distance learning courses via teleconference. The Deepwoods Nature center is the source of the distance learning content and does not receive any content from the other sites nor will it use equipment placed at Deepwoods to benefit users not shown on the *Worksheet*. As such, it is a pure hub and the NSLP data is not used in the calculation. However, the applicant must provide the NSLP data anyway for the hub site so if the Agency were to determine that the site is also an end-user, it can recalculate the NSLP score. Central Community College will be the electronic hub of the network, but it will receive distance learning content from the Nature Center so it is a hub/end-user. The average of the four relevant percentages is 36.125%. The applicant looks at the decision table and enters 15 points in the “Applicant’s Estimated NSLP Score” block.

	Site Name (Same numbering and order as <i>Site & Rurality Worksheets</i>)	Site Type (Hub, etc.)	Total Students	% Eligible (See Attached)
1	Deepwoods Nature Center (school district data)	Hub Not Incl.	347	37.1
2	Central Community College (use school district data)	Hub/End- User	3,200	24.2
3	Kingstown Library (use school district data)	End-user	1,200	28.9
4	Farwell High School (use specific school data)	End-user	235	34.1

5	Clarksburg High School (use specific school data)	End-user	432	57.3
Average NSLP (Sum of NSLP Percentages ÷ # of Sites)				36.125%

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Applicant's Estimated <i>NSLP</i> Score (Enter Points from Scoring Table)	15	NSLP Score (for Agency Use)	
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NSLP Score for Projects in which all End-user Sites are Non-Fixed

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The *NSLP Worksheet* for Non-Fixed Sites is quite similar to that for Fixed Sites except that it comprises all the Public School Districts that serve the non-fixed site service territory, whether in whole or in part.

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	School District Name	Total Students	% Eligible (See Attached)
1	Valley Falls School District	658	37.67%
2	Great Meadow School District	345	56.82%
3	Sandy Beach School District	532	42.78%
4	Roosevelt Public Schools	439	32.49%
Average NSLP (Sum of NSLP Percentages ÷ # of School Districts)			42.44%

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Applicant's Estimated <i>NSLP</i> Score (Enter Points from Scoring Table)	15	NSLP Score (for Agency Use)	
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E-3. Leveraging (Matching Funds and other Assistance)

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The *Leveraging* score is based on the eligible matching fund contribution of the applicant and others. The applicant proposes a match. The Agency determines what is eligible. Based on what you believe to be eligible, we ask you to present an estimated *Leveraging* score in your application. The Agency will correct your estimated score if necessary. This criterion is intended to measure the level of commitment in the local community for the project. A DLT project that is widely supported within a rural community is more likely to be strong and successful. Remember that your application is evaluated for eligibility and scored based on the material submitted by the deadline. Additional information and clarifications not provided as part of the application as received by the deadline will not be solicited or considered by the Agency.

Special Matching Provisions for American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands. Under Federal law, applications from these areas are exempt from matching requirements up to \$200,000. The maximum DLT Grant in FY 2013 is \$500,000 and the required minimum match is 15%, or \$75,000. This means that for the FY 2013 DLT Grant Program, these areas are not required to provide a minimum match. However, to score points in this category, applicants from these areas would need to provide the same match levels as other applicants, *i.e.*, a 30% match would yield 15 points.

Eligible purposes for matching funds are identical to eligible purposes for a DLT grant. (Read this section in conjunction with Section IV, D-1, *Telecommunications System Plan* & D-2, *Budget*.) If an item is not eligible for grant funding, it cannot be credited as a match. For a line-item to be eligible in full for match funding, the application must demonstrate:

1. That none of the use is for ineligible purposes;
2. That none of the use is to benefit sites not shown in the scoring; and
3. That the predominant purpose (over 50% of use) of that line-item is for purposes which meet the DLT grant definition of distance learning or telemedicine as described in the application.

If any part of a line-item is for ineligible purposes, the line-item cannot be budgeted for match. To be eligible, **items proposed as match must be integral to the project** in exactly the same way as items the applicant proposes to obtain with the grant. Keep in mind that the DLT Program is not simply a technology support program. The purpose of matching funds is not to give an advantage to institutions for general technology purchases that are not part of the project and which they would have made in any case such as annual computer purchases. It is intended to build distance learning and/or telemedicine systems by encouraging support for a project that would not exist if not for the grant.

Your project must have non-Federal matching funds equal to at least 15% of the DLT grant requested to qualify for the DLT Program. The minimum match receives no points. Matches that exceed 15% can earn points on a sliding scale. There are special matching provisions for American Samoa, Guam, Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands. Applications from these areas are not required to provide a minimum match in order to be eligible for the DLT Program. However, they must meet the same thresholds (30%, 50%, etc.) in order to earn points in the *Leveraging* category.

In the past there has been some misunderstanding of the use of e-rate funding. E-rate funds are federal funds cannot be applied as matching funds to a DLT project.

From time to time, applicants seek to use an existing non-federal grant as matching funds towards their DLT Grant application. To document the match, they include a copy of the announcement letter from the grantor. However, the letter from the grantor is often not explicit about the purpose of the grant or the letter may imply unstated limitations or exclusions. Under such circumstances, we cannot credit the proposed match. If you intend to apply another grant as matching funds toward the DLT Grant application, include a letter from the grant recipient stating that the money in that grant is available and can be applied to the purposes of the DLT Grant.

Frequently, a complete project requires items that are ineligible as grant or match such as a building addition. Although not eligible as matching funding, financial support and in-kind contributions from the local community (other than the applicant) that go toward such items shows evidence of the commitment of the community to the project. Detail this support *t* and provide evidence of this type of support under F-2, *Needs and Benefits*, but do not claim credit for it as a match.

Sources of Eligible Matching Funds

The Applicant. During this discussion of matching funds, when we speak of the applicant, we include the formal applicant (the organization that signs the SF-424) and also those entities that participate in the project as a hub, hub/end-user and or end-user site regardless of whether grant or match funds are budgeted for that site.

Parties not participating in the DLT project (either as a hub, hub/end-user or end-user site or as manufacturer, vendor, or service provider that will benefit from the grant through the prospective sale of goods or services) - Parties not participating in the project include donors such as individuals, community groups, state and local governments, and charities. It also includes businesses whose products or services will not be purchased for the project. In general, federal funds cannot be used for match. An important exception is funding from the **Appalachian Regional Commission** (ARC). Please see www.arc.gov for a list of eligible counties under the *Counties in Appalachia* heading. Applying ARC funds as a match requires coordination with ARC State Program Managers and States in the Region. See the *ARC Members, Partners and Staff* link also at www.arc.gov for ARC State Program Managers contact information. DLT applicants considering an ARC match are strongly encouraged to contact their ARC State Program Manager(s) early in the process to explore the feasibility of an ARC grant.

State and local government sources: Funds from the State and local funds are not considered federal funds and can be used for match.

Sources that Cannot Be Considered for Matching Funds

Except for specific exceptions as provided for under Federal law, funds directly from other Federal sources cannot be used for matching.

The following note refers to another source that cannot be considered as matching funds, or credit – regarding manufacturers, vendors, and service providers whose equipment or services will be used as part of the DLT Project:

The regulation (7 CFR 1703) states that in-kind items must have an “established monetary value” and that “manufacturer’s or service provider’s discounts are not considered in-kind matching.” Because the purposes for grant and match are identical, a discount cannot be considered a cash match either. The reason for not considering discounts is that, in the world of telecommunications as in many parts of the marketplace, list prices are nominal. They are not an established monetary value. Actual prices are flexible and it is impossible for us to evaluate whether a discount has an actual established monetary value. The same logic applies to any proposed match (cash or in-kind) from a manufacturer, vendor, or other service provider that stands to benefit from the grant or match funds through the prospective sale of equipment or services. A match from one of these entities is indistinguishable from a discount and impossible to evaluate as to its value. As a consequence, we will not accept cash or in-

kind matching funds from manufacturers, vendors, or service providers whose equipment or services will be used in the project.

Types of Matching Funds

Cash: The regulation explicitly conveys the expectation that cash will be the usual method of leveraging when it states that “matching contributions must generally be in the form of cash.” Cash is unambiguous and can be applied to any eligible item in the budget. During review of an application, if the Agency were to determine that some items in the budget are ineligible, the removal of those items would not lower the dollar value of the applicant’s proposed match.

Sometimes applicants characterize their match as “cash,” but specify particular items that they will acquire with their matching funds. When linked to a specific item, such a proposed match is “in-kind,” not cash. As such, the eligibility of the proposed match is directly related to the eligibility of the item as described in the next paragraph.

In-Kind Match: In-kind matches are also acceptable under the regulation, but we do not recommend that the applicant propose them. In-kind matches must be closely scrutinized to determine if they have the same relevance and credibility as a cash match. Remember, an in-kind match must be integral to and necessary for the DLT project, not simply a technology purchase made in the same timeframe. Unlike cash, in-kind matches are tied directly to the eligibility of the proposed in-kind item. **Should we determine that the item is not eligible or not integral and necessary for the project, the item would be removed from the grant and match budget and the proposed match would disappear with it.** This may lead to a lower *Leveraging* score than you expected to earn. If the reductions were to lower your eligible match below 15%, your application would be ineligible for the DLT competition.

As a practical matter, there is no compelling reason for an applicant to propose an in-kind match. Because items acquired before the application deadline are not eligible for grant or match, any items that the applicant would propose as an in-kind match must be obtained with cash after the application is submitted. In other words, when an applicant proposes an in-kind match, it is in effect committing cash with which the proposed in-kind item will be purchased at some point after the deadline, except that if the item is not eligible, neither is the match. A true cash match (unspecified) can be applied against any remaining eligible purpose.

Proposed in-kind matches from organizations not affiliated with the applicant and whose products or services will not be purchased as part of the DLT project are acceptable. Remember that the established monetary value of any proposed in-kind match must be demonstrated through evidence such as actual selling price. List prices and valuations assigned outside of the marketplace by the donor or others are not evidence of an established monetary value.

Special Note about In-Kind Matches

In previous years we have seen a significant increase of in-kind match proposals, no doubt due to pressure on budgets caused by the economic downturn. The purpose of matching funds in a competition is to encourage something that would not otherwise occur, not to give an unfair competitive advantage to entities that routinely make technology purchases over entities that do not. We scrutinize in-kind matches carefully to ensure they are credible and integral parts of the grant project. As is discussed above, there is no benefit to the applicant in proposing an in-kind match

unless it is something that the applicant is already planning on purchasing for another purpose, in which case it is difficult to make the case that the purchase is an integral part of the grant project. The proposed in-kind matches we see are usually general technology purchases of items we do not tend to find in applications from those that propose a cash match. They appear to be compiled by examining planned technology budgets and proposing anything that can possibly be construed as having some connection to the project. In most cases, we do not credit these proposed matches because the applicant does not demonstrate that they are a credible and integral part of the grant project. A “scavenger hunt” approach to matching funds is not a successful strategy. It creates a large review burden for the Agency and only results in disappointment for the applicant when they do not gain the *Leveraging* points they expected to achieve.

Funding Commitments

Failure to properly document the minimum required match is the single largest reason that an application is returned as ineligible for funding consideration. For that reason, before we describe how to document your match, we include this list of errors to avoid.

Tips and Match Documentation Errors to Avoid

1. Only documented matches will be credited. Each donor, including the applicant, must document its match. If you have nothing under Tab E-3 in your application, or nothing but a *Leveraging Worksheet* without proper documentation behind that *Worksheet* as described below, you have no match. As a consequence, your application is ineligible for funding consideration.
2. A signature on the SF-424, *Application for Federal Assistance*, does not document the commitment of matching funds in a form satisfactory to the Agency. Neither is a reference to matching funds, say in the *Budget* or *Telecommunications System Plan*. To be eligible, a match must be properly documented by the donor under Tab E-3.
3. The person signing letters documenting matching funds must have authority to commit funds on behalf of the donor. If you are not clearly such a person, for example, a chief executive officer, a board chairman, or school superintendent, you should attach evidence of your ability to commit matching funds. Examples of titles that do not convey clear authority are “technical coordinator,” “IT Manager,” or “Radiology Department Manager.”
4. An unsigned letter or a letter that does not carry the donor’s title is not acceptable. Neither is a letter that is signed “for” the responsible party and initialed, unless the person who initialed for the responsible party provides evidence not only of the responsible party’s authority to commit the organization, but of the initialing party’s authority to sign on the responsible party’s behalf.
5. You cannot commit funds on behalf of any organization except your own. If you are the superintendent of XYZ High School, you cannot commit funds on behalf of ABC middle school, a school over which you have no authority. The commitment for ABC school must come from that organization.
6. Conditional matches are not acceptable. For example, “We commit ZYX Funds, subject to Board Approval.” Until the Board Resolution is passed, no match exists. If it is not passed before the application deadline and included as part of the application, no proposed match can be credited because the funds were not committed by that deadline as required under the regulation.

7. Remember that proposed matches must be relevant to the project in the same way as items for which grant funds are requested. Do not propose as match items that are not going to the project. For example, if the proposed match is coming from a school district, you cannot be credited for funds going to schools that are not end-users as shown in the application. If you are proposing an in-kind match, specify the line-items in your supporting letter by the line-item number shown in the budget.

8. **Proposed Matches must be committed and available as of the application deadline.** This is true whether for a *pure* cash match or for the cash that you have committed as an in-kind match. Matches proposed in future years are considered conditional and will not be credited. For example, if an applicant proposes \$100 per year for ten years, we will credit only the \$100 committed in the year of the application. While you may wish to do internal budgeting over time, a match commitment must be for the entire amount without conditions.

9. Match letters must be specific and state the dollar amount. Avoid statements like “We commit 15% of our need.” Instead, state a specific dollar amount such as “We commit \$320 dollars, 15% as much as the grant budget proposed for our site in the application.” If your cash match is intended only for the benefit of a specific site(s), so state in your letter such as “We commit \$480 dollars, 30% as much as the grant budget proposed for our site in the application. Should the grant budget for our site be reduced, our proposed match is also reduced so that it remains 30% of the grant budget for our site in the application.”

Match Documentation Specifics - The applicant must document the project’s proposed matching funds in form and substance satisfactory to the Agency. The documentation must be placed under Tab E-3 of your application. We have arranged the *Leveraging Worksheet* to provide a place to enter each contribution. Each proposed match entry on the worksheet must be supported by a signed letter from the individual donor proposing the match.

1. **Be signed by a person capable of obligating the donor organization.** Include the printed name and title of the person signing the letter. The letter must clearly indicate the name of the donor organization and state that the funds are committed to the proposed DLT project as described in the *Budget* and elsewhere in the application. If your name and title do not appear on the donor organization’s letterhead, attach evidence of your position to the letter.

2. **If the match is cash, state the dollar amount.** Letters without a stated cash amount cannot be credited as a cash match.

3. If the proposed match is in-kind, state the actual dollar amount and give a complete description of the donation identified by the line-item number in the budget and the expected date of purchase. Letters that do not identify the line-items in the budget cannot be credited as an in-kind match. Keep in mind that items acquired before the application deadline are not eligible for grant or match. Also, demonstrate how the established monetary value of the item was determined. Proposed matches must be consistent on the SF-424, the *Budget*, and the *Leveraging Worksheet*. Proposed matches not documented under Tab E-3 with a letter as described above will not be credited in the *Leveraging* score.

Point Value and Allocation for Matching Funds

Up to **35 points** are available under this criterion. Points are awarded as follows:

<u>Percentage of Eligible Match Compared to Grant Request</u>	<u>Points</u>
15% < Match % ≤ 30%	0
30% < Match % ≤ 50%	15
50% < Match % ≤ 75%	25
75% < Match % ≤ 100%	30
Match > 100%	35

Example: Applicants receive different scores based on their proposed matching funds:

	<u>Grant Requested</u>	<u>Matching Funds</u>	<u>% of GRANT Funds</u>	<u>Points Scored</u>
Applicant #1	\$100,000	\$15,000	15%	0
Applicant #2	\$100,000	\$45,000	45%	15
Applicant #3	\$100,000	\$60,000	60%	25
Applicant #4	\$100,000	\$80,000	80%	30
Applicant #5	\$100,000	\$105,000	105%	35

F. Subjective Scoring Supporting Documentation

Subjective Scoring Strategies to Avoid

Over the history of the DLT Program, we have seen three attempted strategies that do not bear fruit for applicants trying to achieve higher subjective scores. The first is that applicants request copies of successful applications from prior years to use as a template or model. The second is that, at the conclusion of the scoring process, applicants request the scoring team's comments. The request usually involves language like "we want to see where we missed the mark" or "we want to know what we have to show to score well." Sometimes we will receive an appeal based on the argument that because applicant has addressed each item mentioned in the subjective scoring sections of the *Application Guide* they should get the maximum score.

A successful application is not a fixed target. We are looking for well-thought-out, reasonably scaled projects with compelling narratives, and what looks to be a supportive community of parties that are committed to the project's success and longevity. We respect each project's, each applicant's individuality and judge them according to the principles and criteria that have been discussed throughout this Application Guide. We do not solicit or collect "official comments" from our scorers. If we did, those comments would become the "*de facto* standard" towards which each applicant would aim their narrative and for which they would expect to earn high scores. Finally, it is why covering each item mentioned in this narrative part of the DLT competition does not ensure the highest score. In the four subjective scoring categories (*Additional NSLP*, *Needs and Benefits*, *Innovativeness* and *Cost Effectiveness*), scoring is subjective, not absolute. As the name suggests, subjective scores are based on the subjective reasoning of our scoring teams to the supporting arguments and diagrams in the application. The scoring mechanism is intended to create a ranking of projects within these

categories. Distance Learning and Telemedicine projects evolve over time as needs and technology change. A score received in a prior year for a similar project is not relevant. Applications tend to improve from year to year, so an applicant who uses the same quality of documentation year after year should not be surprised if it is judged progressively lower each year.

Provide self-contained arguments in each of the four subjective scoring categories. If the situation you describe in your *Needs and Benefits* section (F-2) refers to one of your maps (associated with the *Rurality Worksheet* or the *Site Worksheet*) make an exact reference to that map or provide an additional copy as part of your subjective narrative. Generally speaking, applicants who apply to the DLT Program are rural and share relatively high levels of need. For a project to receive a competitive score in this program, the applicant must successfully demonstrate that it exceeds the norm for rural projects in a particular category.

Areas that would receive distance learning or telemedical service for the first time will generally score higher in the subjective categories of *Needs & Benefits*, *Innovativeness*, and *Cost Effectiveness* than those projects that already have these services. For example, in a comparison of two projects with otherwise identical end-users, but where one is for first-time installation of video-conferencing capability, and the other is for an upgrade of existing capability, the first-time service will likely earn the higher scores.

F-1. Additional NSLP

The DLT program uses the National School Lunch Program (NSLP as described above under E-1) as the primary measure of general economic need for an area served by a proposed project. **The *Additional NSLP* category is intended to provide an opportunity for an applicant that has scored below average to make their case that the *NSLP* score underestimates the relative economic need of their project area.**

An applicant with NSLP eligibility below 50% may request *Additional NSLP* points. If that applicant can demonstrate that the area it would serve, or a subset of the public it would serve, is not accurately captured by the NSLP percentage. **Based on the strength of the evidence provided by the applicant, the Agency may award up to ten points in this category.**

To gain points in this category, the applicant must specifically request them in Section F-1 of the Application (See *Additional NSLP Worksheet* in the *Toolkit*.).

F-2. Community Needs and Project Benefits

This criterion measures the extent to which the proposed project meets the need for distance learning or telemedicine services in rural areas. We may award up to **45 points** in this category. You must **document the specific needs of the community and how the proposed project will address those needs**. You must also document evidence of support from the community.

Define the Community

Your narrative should give us a clear picture of the community or communities the project will be serving. It could be the students, teachers and parents in a particular school district, residents who suffer with mental illness, elderly patients receiving home health care, or the entire community. Define exactly who the project is designed to serve.

Need for Services

Clearly state the economic, geographic, educational, or health care challenges facing the project's respective communities, and provide any documentation that demonstrates the challenges. Use verifiable data and statistics to substantiate and quantify these challenges. **Demonstrate how the proposed project will help resolve these challenges** and why the applicant cannot afford the project without a grant.

While a brief overall sketch of the local economy and geography is useful for context, extended discussions of the overall economic health of a region is not necessary, since that need is captured by the NSLP score.

Document support for the project provided by professionals in the educational or health care fields. The more specific their professional opinion is regarding your situation and the proposed project as a solution, the more compelling it is. Substantiate the underserved educational or health care nature of the project's proposed service area; and justify, explain, and document the specific educational or medical services that will provide direct benefits to rural residents.

You should demonstrate demand by rural residents and other beneficiaries for the educational or medical services that the project would provide. In other words, show that the project is designed to meet local community needs. Willingness of local end-users or community-based organizations to contribute to the costs of completing, operating, or maintaining the project is a strong indication of community support. Documentation of support includes letters of financial and non-financial commitment towards the project from local organizations.

Address the participation by local residents and organizations in planning and developing the project. Include evidence of this participation in your application. Examples of evidence of community involvement include community meetings, public forums and surveys.

The Agency will also consider the extent to which the application is consistent with the State strategic plan prepared by the USDA Rural Development State Director. (See IV-G, *Contact with USDA State Director*.)

Benefits Derived from Services

In addition to documenting the need for services, describe how the project would assist the community in solving these challenges. **Document the specific benefits of your project and quantify them in terms of expected outcomes.** Tie the benefits of your project DIRECTLY to the stated needs you intend to address. Provide measurable targets or goals such as estimates of the number of people that will benefit from the project.

Examples

For a distance learning project that serves secondary schools, provide the **number of schools and students** that will benefit. You should also **document** all other benefits provided by the project with quantifiable goals when possible such as:

- four-year foreign language availability up from 300 to 1,200 students;
- organic chemistry offered for first time to entire district;

- expanded educational facility use, like evening vocational training;
- reducing the dropout rate from 17% to 12%.

For a telemedicine project that serves a consortium of hospitals, provide the **number of health care facilities and the potential number of patients** to benefit. You should also **document** all other benefits provided by the project such as:

- time and monetary savings to the community from telemedicine diagnoses;
- 400 patients receiving at-home monitoring;
- 4 doctors retained in your community;
- lives saved due to prompt medical diagnosis.

Document any ancillary benefits or multiple uses that would create added value in the rural communities which the project will serve. Examples include training, information resources, library assets, adult education, lifetime learning, and job creation. If applicable, you can address particular community problems such as out-migration and the extent to which the project would reduce or prevent population loss.

Discuss Other Projects Involving DLT Awards

DLT Grants cannot be awarded to projects that duplicate facilities. If any of the sites or service territory in the project as described in the application are part of another application in FY 2013 or were part of a project funded in the previous two DLT competitions (2011 & 2012), explain any relationship between or among these projects as you discuss the specific need and benefit that will be provided by the proposed project. In particular, discuss how match and grant funding for this project, if approved, would complement previous efforts. (Provide a more thorough discussion of project overlaps in the *Telecommunications System Plan*, as described above. In the absence of an explanation, overlaps in projects are assumed to be duplication and as a consequence, the project could be rejected as ineligible or scored comparatively low in *Needs and Benefits*.)

In addition, applicants with previous awards should discuss the implementation of the previous award with respect to the use of funds. This is particularly true if funds from the former award have not yet been drawn down in its entirety. The Agency strives to make the best possible use of DLT Grant Funds. **Previous awardees who are not diligent about using grant funds in a timely manner for their intended purpose should be aware that this will be considered a negative indication of need when assigning the *Needs & Benefits* score.**

F-3. Innovativeness of the Project

To innovate is to make changes in something established, especially by introducing new methods, ideas, or products.

This criterion will evaluate the innovative qualities of a project, and how it uses distance learning or telemedicine in a unique way to improve how educational or medical services are delivered in a community, or to introduce new methods, ideas or procedures to those services as a result of the technology. Up to 15 points may be awarded in this criterion.

The following issues may be addressed:

- The extent to which the project uses technology to introduce something new to the way services are delivered;
- The extent to which the project incorporates new teaching methods (distance learning) or medical treatments (telemedicine) in their project areas;
- The extent to which the project reflects a unique adaptation of technology based on the special needs or circumstances of the proposed area to be served by the project.

F-4. Cost Effectiveness of the Project

This criterion evaluates the efficiency with which the proposed project delivers educational and medical benefits to beneficiaries. Up to **35 points** may be awarded for this criterion. Keep in mind that the emphasis in this criterion is *value*, not simply the lowest cost.

Examples of evaluating cost-effectiveness

- The extent to which your organization considered alternative technological options for delivering the proposed services. Provide sufficient documentation reflecting the analytical and financial methods used in your choice of technology as the most cost effective option. Include cost information such as quotations from multiple vendors that you provided in the TSP and Budget.
- The extent to which the project leverages available transmission facilities. Example includes sharing transmission facilities with other entities or any other measure taken to lower the project's costs for using such facilities.
- The extent to which the project will leverage distance learning or telemedicine resources from regional, statewide, and national networks. Because state and regional networks are becoming so widespread, there has to be a substantial impact on the project's benefits to have any effect on an application's score.
- Whether buying or leasing specific equipment is more cost-effective.
- How the facilities funded by the project could benefit the community in multiple ways.
- Unsupported assertions of cost effectiveness are not useful. A spreadsheet showing initial cost and annual costs of all considered alternative technologies and implementations can offer strong support for a good score in this category. Explain the assumptions and sources for cost information used in the comparison.
- Be sure that the facts presented are meaningful to the reviewer. For example, a statement that a telemedicine project will provide the capability for 42,000 rural residents to have access to teleradiology facilities at a cost of 29¢ per resident is not as meaningful as a statement that the teleradiology project will reduce the cost to a rural resident of a chest x-ray from \$125 to \$20, and will save the patient 6 hours of driving time.

G. Contact with USDA State Director

You must provide evidence that your organization has consulted with the USDA State Director for Rural Development about the availability of other sources of funding available at the State or local level. Include this evidence as part of your application.

You must also provide evidence from the State Director for Rural Development that your application conforms with the State strategic plan as prepared under section 381D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 *et seq.*). Not all states have a strategic plan, so you should indicate if such a plan does not exist.

Note: Applicants should contact the USDA State Director as early as possible in the application process. You can find a listing of the State Rural Development Offices at:
www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd_map.html

H. SUTA

Section on SUTA for the application

The 2008 Farm Bill (Pub. L. 110-246, codified at 7 U.S.C. 906f), authorizes the Substantially Underserved Trust Areas (SUTA) provisions, as implemented by RUS as regulation 7 CFR 1700, *Substantially Underserved Trust Areas* (the SUTA regulation).

Under the SUTA regulation, the applicant may request the Agency apply one or more SUTA provisions to its application. To receive consideration the applicant needs to submit to RUS a completed application in compliance with 7 CFR 1703 (the DLT regulation), and include a section requesting consideration under the SUTA regulation. In summary this section notifies RUS that the applicant is seeking consideration under the SUTA regulation and identifies the discretionary authorities the Secretary of Agriculture described in the SUTA regulation that it seeks to have applied to its application. The applicant needs to include information demonstrating eligibility for consideration under the SUTA regulation including an explanation and documentation of the high need for the DLT benefits.

RUS will notify the applicant in writing (1) whether the application is eligible to receive consideration under this subpart and if one or more SUTA requests are granted; or (2) whether the application is not eligible to receive further consideration under the SUTA regulation. If the SUTA request is not granted, after such notice the applicant may choose to withdraw its application or, if the application is still eligible without SUTA consideration, request that RUS treat its application as an ordinary application for processing. Further information on this contingency is included below.

RUS recommends that the applicant includes the request for SUTA consideration in a separate section within the application (e.g. as a cover letter or addendum to the application), preferably in the same binder. If the request is not in the same binder, it must include sufficient information to tie the SUTA request to the appropriate application.

For applicants that will seek a grant regardless whether or not they obtain SUTA consideration, RUS recommends that they initially prepare an eligible application to maximize the scoring per the application guide without any SUTA considerations. Once this application is completed, a section on SUTA should be added to request the SUTA considerations that the applicant is seeking. This section will need also to request that RUS process the application as an ordinary application if RUS determines that the application is ineligible for consideration under SUTA. In this way if RUS does not grant the SUTA consideration, the application will still be deemed eligible. However, for any application not granted SUTA consideration that is deemed ineligible because of a failure to document certain application criteria, RUS will notify the applicant of this circumstance in the SUTA notification letter and the applicant may elect to submit the missing, required information. RUS will consider such additional information as long as the information is received by RUS by the application dateline. RUS will fax and email a facsimile of the letter to the applicant and encourages the applicant to do likewise in its response.

I. Certifications

The *Toolkit* contains certification forms to demonstrate compliance with other Federal statutes and regulations. There are ten required certifications and we have numbered them C-1 through C-10 so that you can see at a glance if they are all in your application. Applications submitted without a non-duplication certification will be assumed that the project is duplicative in the services offered and will be returned as ineligible.

Important Note: We receive many applications from groups of legal entities that have joined for the purpose of a DLT Grant application. If your application comes from such a group, and that group is not eligible to apply as a consortium (See Section IV-B of the Application Guide with respect to Legal Eligibility), each entity that comprises the group must provide a set of these certifications. In such cases, the volume of paperwork can be quite large. If the applicant so chooses, they may provide only one copy of the certifications, which should be included with the original copy of the application.

- **C-1** Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination
- **C-2** Architectural barriers
- **C-3** Flood hazard area precautions
- **C-4** Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970
- **C-5** Drug-free workplace
- **C-6** Debarment and suspension rules
- **C-7** Lobbying for contracts, grants, etc.
- **C-8** Non-duplication of services
- **C-9** Environmental impact
- **C-10** Assurance Regarding Felony Conviction or Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants

Section V - Putting it all Together

Assemble and tab your grant application in the following order, which is the same order as described under Section IV - *The Complete Application*. Material not located under the proper tab will delay processing time. If material is relevant under more than one tab, it should have an accurate and clearly marked reference page. Any supplemental information should be included under the relevant tab. The **Toolkit** provides forms, worksheets, sample certifications, and Web resources to help you find information and present it in your application.

TAB	ITEM
A	SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance with (Site Worksheet & Optional Survey)
B	Legal Eligibility
C	Executive Summary
D	Project Information
D-1	Telecommunications System Plan and Scope of Work
D-2	Budget
D-3	Financial Information and Sustainability
D-4	Statement of Experience
E	Objective Scoring
E-1	Rurality Calculation Worksheet and Supporting Documentation
E-2	NSLP Worksheet and Supporting Documentation
E-3	Leveraging Worksheet and Evidence of Funding Commitments
F	Subjective Scoring Supporting Documentation
F-1	Request for Additional NSLP Points Worksheet (If Applicable)
F-2	Need for Services and Project Benefits
F-3	Innovativeness of the Project
F-4	Cost-Effectiveness of the Project
G	Contact with USDA State Director—Rural Development
H	Certifications